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Vol. 6

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Volume 6

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Number 4

Our Writers Are Winning Victories Too

EDWIN BERRY BURGUM¹

THE war we are involved in is a new kind of war in more senses than those usually mentioned. It is new in its effect upon literature. Contrary to the pessimistic expectations of most of us, it is proving a tonic to good writing. Precedent has been to the contrary. We have never fought a war before which has so directly and so powerfully stimulated the imagination of writers. The popular magazines are full of stories of the war, and they are not uncommon in the movie theaters. Established writers are turning to the new material. But the phenomenon which is most deserving of attention, I believe, is the appearance of a great number of new writers, many of whom are young journalists with actual experience of the fighting.

In previous wars we have had to wait until the heat of conflict cooled before any literature of lasting merit appeared. Whitman, it is true, wrote in the midst of the Civil War with considerable personal knowledge of army camps and hospitals. Both his poems and his prose accounts deserve re-reading today. They

form the real tradition, though lost awhile, which some of our new writers are restoring and enriching. But, though written during the Civil War, they were not published until its end and, like the rest of Whitman's work, received scant attention from the general public until the twentieth century. A meretricious tradition grew up instead, owing something to the spirit of the frontier, but more to a growing imperialism, and represented by the stories of Richard Harding Davis. The democratic idealism of Whitman gave way in this new literature of the Spanish-American War to a gusty bravado. An adventurous egotism masked in a false heroism the arrogant assumption of the white man's burden. Davis' work only exaggerated the mood of the country. It did not falsify it. But such a mood was itself a falsification of the valid tradition of Whitman, and the literature it immediately stimulated is now forgotten. Davis' stories would not be accepted today as proof that the crisis of war promotes honest writing, free from rhetoric.

The first World War aroused a literary activity comparable in quantity to that of this present conflict. Much of it in-

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tensified the love of adventure and the recklessness of individual bravery of the Davis' tradition. Though by no means as frank as the English tradition of Henley and Kipling, it carried undertones of the same delusion of race superiority. But they were concealed and rather hopefully contradicted by a conscious belief that we were making the world safe for democracy. When, as less frequently happened, this belief became the focus of attention, the contradiction dictated its sentimentalization. But whether the predominant emotion was sentimental idealism or individual aggressiveness, it could hardly produce writing of the first quality; and, of this mass of prose and poetry, hardly a handful of poems survives today. Though the cause of the corruption has been generally held by critics to lie in the *prima facie* impossibility to write honestly under the stress of the moment, the more plausible explanation is to be found, I believe, in the nature of the war itself. We were actually trying to "make the world safe" for the commercial interests of our own democracy.

At least so the generation of the twenties that followed sadly or cynically took for granted. All the "good" literature of the last war was a prose written afterward to deny the validity of everything that had been written while it was in progress. The *Three Soldiers* of Dos Passos, *The Enormous Room* of E. E. Cummings, and Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* are not only considered our best commentary in literature on the first World War; they register a complete disillusionment with its aims and achievements. And they register it with such felicity of style and so convincing a fabric of narrative that they have been generally accepted as the proper interpretation of the war and a corrective to

the hasty, distorted reactions it had immediately set up in writers.

So completely has this point of view been accepted that at the beginning of the present war Archibald MacLeish sent out an appeal, with desperate dignity, for a return to an optimistic confidence in the genuineness of our democracy. Writing with a trace of the mystical fervor of Whitman, what MacLeish was really advocating was a return to the Whitman tradition. What he seemed to be pointing out was that its violation in the tradition of Davis had set up a reaction to an opposite extreme of cynical renunciation in the fiction of the twenties. He called upon writers to become aware that we are once more engaged in a war for democracy, a war to complete the unfinished business of the first World War. He urged them to become propagandists for democracy. If they were animated by a veritable insight into the nature of the war, he felt, they could not fail to produce a literature at once of good quality and inspiring effect. He besought other writers to repent of earlier sins, as he had done, and write now from the better side of their natures.

If our writers appear to have paid heed to MacLeish, it is, I believe, for reasons somewhat different from that which he enunciates. MacLeish wrote as though the creative artist can choose to let either the better or the worse side of his human nature determine his expression. His point of view implies that Davis might have been loyal to the Whitman tradition if he had made the proper ethical choice. Is it not rather true that Davis wrote as he did because he could not do otherwise, when American life itself had lost contact with the ideals Whitman had sensed and celebrated? A literary tradition of valid idealism is bound to degenerate into hypocrisy when

it is forced upon an alien reality. Only when life recovers the ideal, can art reflect it. The only exception is when art, reduced to the forms of oratory or lyric poetry, recognizing the reality, ceases to represent the objective world and limits itself to honest exhortation or the subjective mood of the isolated individual. But it is not such voices crying in the wilderness that MacLeish has in mind. So, if our novelists seem to have followed his bidding, it is that a change in the nature of the objective situation has permitted them.

In the first World War the military work came first and the political afterward. But in this war the military and the political conflicts are being simultaneously resolved as part of a single process in a fashion that becomes clearer to everybody every day. The soldier fighting gets the political clarity that comes from voting, that comes from contact with the ideology of fascism in German soldiers, from contact with the mechanisms, good and bad, we are using to restore democracy in liberated countries. The citizen back home gets a similar clarity from the changing course of events as the newspapers are forced by circumstances to bring it to his attention. Hypocrisies, like the "democracy" of Chiang Kai-shek, somehow through the very process of the fighting in this war get exposed. It is becoming clearer as time passes that our democratic objectives are being attained. The writer thus finds it more and more easy to express his humane aspirations through his fiction, since he is utilizing a framework of facts that more and more vividly corroborates them.

The disillusioned writers of the twenties were entirely correct in their diagnosis, after the event, of the first World War. And no one who speaks the truth,

however unpleasant, has anything to repent. Nor, if the objective situation had not changed, would there be any profit from repentance. It would only induce a return to the emotional hypocrisy or the emotional tension that stultifies all writing in which there is a contradiction between the reality of the situation, as it indelibly burns itself into the emotional life of the writer of talent, and the fallacious interpretation his conscious intention may be forcing upon him. We should rather be thankful for the pessimists of the twenties. They have played an indispensable role in making us face the facts. They have compelled us to test the validity of principle in the fire of actual events. A writer needs fidelity to experience quite as much as ideals. If his experience is profound, it will be valid; it will test and reveal whether the ideals that accompany it are valid or no. The literature of the twenties has served this purpose. It has guaranteed that our writers have a keen interest in observation of the facts and a keen eye for discriminating their comparative importance.

The consequence has been that our writers in touch with the actual events of this war, whatever their shortcomings, virtually without exception provide a vivid, honest insight into what is actually happening. The exceptions are writers, however talented, who were formed in too early and alien an environment. Steinbeck, for instance, in *The Moon Is Down* illustrates the meretriciousness that comes from forcing a good ideal upon an alien experience. Although Steinbeck has lived with our soldiers, his talent, forming in the twenties, not able to profit from the literature of those years like the younger writers, merely projects his sentimentality upon this different later material. The result

is that he perversely accomplishes the opposite to what he presumably intended. His anti-Fascist mayor is a weak and aged man, whose democracy, which formerly prescribed a passive compliance to the people of the village, now readily gives way to a whining compliance to the Nazis. Since he is incapable of any positive act on his own initiative, our pity for him verges upon contempt. Steinbeck forces the reader, rather, to sympathize with the Junker officers, caught in a vulgar Nazi war not of their own choosing or in their aristocratic tradition. When they become cruel, as a result of their compliance to a less admirable force than democracy, we tend to lose our respect for human nature; for these men, at least, had an innate courage which might have been turned to a good purpose. Steinbeck's novel becomes an argument for a soft peace. It leads one to feel that the restoration of the Junker aristocracy, under the right safeguards, would be preferable to repeating the flabbiness of the Weimar Republic as personified by the mayor. Since one cannot believe that he intended this effect, one can only take the novel as an instance of what happens when a talent for writing is compelled to work in alien fields.

The writers I have in mind are the young newspapermen, in their twenties or early thirties, readers of Hemingway and Steinbeck, but men whose personalities were crystallizing in the days when the New Deal was pulling us out of the depression and generating self-hope in place of the self-pity of the earlier generation. Their interest in writing is not a reverence for the great tradition, though they are acquainted with it, but springs from an intense and restless, a thoroughly American, curiosity about human beings. Out of loathing perhaps for the

ivory tower, positively out of an inner demand to be like other men, even though writers, sometimes leaving college without their degrees because of the need within them to see the world, they fell into newspaper or magazine work because it brought their zest to write into closest contact with the ferment of life, and, when a war came along, they saw in it the extreme of intense and hazardous living. Doubtless similar motives prompted Richard Harding Davis, but he came at a less happy period. These young men not only had the advantage of a better war (for the Nazis had forced its definition upon us); they brought to it that sense of the daily practice of democracy which was perhaps the great spiritual contribution of the New Deal to the tradition of Lincoln. But they had also to aid them the full maturity of American literature. They had the advantage of a tradition not merely of the study of literary ideas and masterpieces but of sensitive and sure-sinewed craftsmanship in writing.

Whatever they wrote, therefore, was bound to achieve the minimum of frank, readable reporting. If there were ideals to report, they too were included. When one takes a bird's-eye view of this new writing, he can have little doubt that the war is a process. At the beginning there was, in this writing, no anti-Fascist idealism, and it has begun to appear as a conscious element of the narrative only recently and when the European theater of war is concerned. Though it may appear later when China becomes the focus of attention, at present the literature of the Pacific war reflects a soldier's doing his duty because his country demands it against a foe of an inferior race who fights with incomprehensible barbarity and awakens an answering aversion. "The Japs are like animals," says the marine

in John Hersey's *Into the Valley*. "Against them you have to learn a whole new set of physical reactions. You have to get used to their animal stubbornness and tenacity. They take to the jungle as if they had been bred there, and like some beasts you never see them until they are dead." However limited the motivation for the fighting expressed in this quotation, one can scarcely doubt that it gives an honest account of the attitude of the American soldier and civilian toward the Japanese war.

But the special merit of Hersey's book is that of this new literature generally. It is the firmness of the book's plan and the discretion in the choice of detail to carry it out. He has taken but a single episode in the battle of Guadalcanal to write about, a skirmish of marines, which was unsuccessful. They were driven back, though the Japanese also retreated as a result of the general engagement. This happy ending, however, is utilized only to put the action the more convincingly within the framework of the indomitable courage of the Marines. It symbolizes the self-confidence with which they have endured the immediate catastrophe, unswerving in their belief in final victory. What is kept in the foreground is their sense of learning a new mode of fighting, the alertness to unknown dangers in the insidious tropical jungle, the willingness to do as they are commanded, indifferent to suffering, supported by sheer liking for the type of men who are their buddies. It is these human traits that Hersey keeps in the center of attention, and he conveys them through a sensitive description of the action. He does not distort the men's reactions for a decorative effect, but, by dealing only with the significant ones, he makes us feel more powerfully their quality. He does not, for instance, as

Hudson would have done, describe the jungle for its own sake, to bring out some mysterious quality latent in it. He describes it only when to do so will key still higher the emotion accompanying the military action.

Our column moved in absolute silence. It is impossible to describe the creepy sensation of walking through that empty-looking but crowded-seeming jungle.

What made it eerie was that the jungle was far from silent. The birds whose cries had sounded so cheerful from the heights were terrifying now. Parakeets and macaws screeched from nowhere. There was one bird with an altogether unmusical call which sounded exactly like a man whistling shrilly through his fingers three times—and then another, far off in Japanese territory, would answer. The stream made a constant noise, and an annoying one. It seemed terribly important to listen for the enemy (as if the Japs would be so stupid as to crackle through the underbrush), but the stream's continuous chatter, maddeningly cheerful, made that impossible in any case. Off and on we could hear the noises of our own power—planes and artillery—far above the jungle roof. These should have been encouraging noises: up on the ridges they had been. But down here the noises were merely weird—the eccentric whirr of the strafing P-39s, sounding as if some big cog in each engine were unlubricated; the soft, fluttery sound of shells in flight, like the noise a man would make if he were to blow through a keyhole.

Tiny noises became exaggerated in our minds. Drops of accumulated drizzle would crash down onto fallen leaves like heavy footfalls. The click of a canteen cover belonging to one of our own men at some point where the trail doubled back beyond a screen of jungle sounded like a whole machine gun being set up. And then when some really big noise would break out—a dead tree falling over at this of all times—our whole column would jump with caricatured vigilance.

Such writing passes from reporting into what we call "fiction" when the reporting (and what the reporting has done to the author) happens to evoke a significant theme. He then takes his attention from the actual sequence of

specific facts as he has observed them. He selects and rearranges them to the increase of their essential integrity under the prompting of the theme. The absorption in what is happening has already taken place, and now it generally gives way to study of its effect upon the men involved. One who follows this literature of the war, therefore, can see the creative process functioning with something like the clarity of a laboratory experiment. For the Pacific war has produced at least one good novel in Howard Hunt's *Limit of Darkness*, which differs from Hersey's reporting in the respects I have indicated.

The fact probably of Hunt's substituting airmen for marines afforded him material of richer potentialities. For flying stimulates the imagination of the modern man as keenly as exploration of unknown oceans did the Elizabethan; and, with a half-century of writing which has explored the unknown within man himself, our writers are able to bring a greater precision of detail to their description of the new adventure. Already before the war, several authors had conveyed to the reader on terra firma the sensations of the lonely flyer in that vast and separate world where he feels so strangely dominant until its treachery disturbs him. Perhaps this difference alone is enough to account for the use of metaphor instead of comparison in Hunt's descriptions and the consequent increase of vividness in appeal to eye and ear.

The rays fixed themselves in a huge flexible triangle whose apex moved searchingly across the sky. Then they heard the first burst of ak-ak and the other guns began firing and there were streams of tracers pouring up from the darkness, and shells that burst like rockets above the lights and they could see the first bomber in the lights, flying slowly like a blinded insect, and two more came above it in a Vee,

and there was a burst that seemed to be in the middle of them, but the planes came on and suddenly the firing had stopped and they could hear the hum of the planes coming towards them out of the night. But above them there was a high-pitched whine that knifed down out the sky and a brief burst of tracers stabbed in the side of the first bogie. Flames seared through it, and then there was another fleck of orange light as the second burst hit it and the plane blew up in the searchlights and part of the wing came down and the plane spun out of the triangle of light, its flames wrapping it in a brilliant shroud until it hit the jungle, stunning them with its detonation, and flames showered high above the dark outlines of the trees.

But that careless cry of "good luck and good hunting" with which these airmen were speeded on their mission carries an undertone. If it did not, their frame of mind would be scarcely better than that of Mussolini's son. True, they do not fight for the pleasure of killing but for that of winning. And the pleasure, therefore, in this description is not the cruel arrogant satisfaction that a Japanese plane has been hit but, over and beyond this, and somehow humanizing it, an almost impersonal delight in the sheer color of the scene. Yet such passages are rare in the book. Merely to win does not seem enough. More commonly an undertone seeps through of the hazardousness of flying. For these men live upon two levels: their bravery and sense of duty cannot eradicate the knowledge of the percentages of fliers killed. Even though a mystic sense of individual luck is set up, their mood is sobered by the statistical imminence of death.

After the buoyance and expectation of the voyage out, after the exaltation of the objective successfully accomplished, the suppressed undertone is drawn to the surface by a new set of facts. To the planes lost in the bombing must be added those shot down by

ack-ack on the way home and those whose earlier wounds prove mortal. One pilot is discovered missing; another wires his comrades of the squadron the simple statement they see him fulfil before their eyes, when he is forced down into the hungry sea. The return to the base that is home only incidentally carries news of victory. It is within each man's spirit, a return to empty beds and corridors, to a silence once broken by the familiar tone of comrades' voices. This sense of emptiness, the bitter price of victory, is overwhelming. One misses from it the note of conviction which makes the most extreme suffering endurable, the belief in a cause such as vitalizes virtually everything the Russians have written during the present war. *Limit of Darkness* does not conform to MacLeish's prescription. But, judged aesthetically, it is the best novel we have yet produced during the war, and it is without question representative of the attitude that prevails in our air force. It is the significant aspect of a situation whose unimportant aftermath Wakeman has treated in *Shore Leave* as quite a separate story.

The European theater of the war has produced a great deal of writing on the order of *Into the Valley*. But when it has turned from reportage, its fiction has borne a less melancholy countenance. For here the desire to win is given body by some awareness of the profit to society involved. Military victory is no longer the sufficient goal, and, when the ideals of the war are sensed, a new conception of comradeship appears. Friendship is no longer a desperate compensation for lack of a goal worth embracing; it becomes less tense with an awareness of the broader purpose, and, when death breaks it, remembrance of the worthwhile purpose shared palliates the indi-

vidual sorrow. These are truths, I think, the war is bearing home upon us. But they have been engulfed in our national tradition by emphasis upon the self-sufficiency of the individual; and it is therefore not to be expected that writers will be free from awkwardness in handling them. If the aesthetic merit of *Limit of Darkness* is largely due to its being in the national tradition of the past, writing that reflects new trends may have a refreshing appeal, but it is likely to be less well done. It is difficult to translate the generous poetic ideals of Whitman into the specific day-to-day detail that the novel requires. But this is being done.

Harry Brown's *A Walk in the Sun* is an excellent example of the new intention. The skeleton of the story, as usual in these novels, is quite simple. A bargeful of soldiers, making a landing on the Italian shore, is deprived of leadership by the death of its lieutenant. Others in command are successively killed until the survivors find themselves obeying a corporal. After finding from a map one of the soldiers is carrying that the objective assigned them is a certain farmhouse, the corporal pulls the group together, plans the assault, and leads the men into a deadly machine-gun fire. Although the word is not once mentioned, the story illustrates the functioning of democracy, the initiative of common men toward a common objective. Scattered, leaderless, at first the group approaches demoralization; the situation throws up one temporary leader after another. But the whole group is forced to do the thinking, specifically to decide whether to attack a Nazi tank that rolls down the road reconnoitering or to wait and get it on its return. Tyne, who emerges as the final leader, does not arrogate that position; he gets it because by common consent his fellow-

soldiers recognize his merit. The disintegration of the group is checked not so much by its finding a leader as by the co-operative process, utilizing all their talents, through the functioning of which the leader appears.

In other works the characters have been of the officer class, or they have reflected only the guts of the common soldier or, in lighter instances, his crude, picturesque exterior. But Brown's book has the distinction of showing the soldier in the diversity of his hyphenated Americanism (of French, Spanish, Irish descent), in the particularity of his colloquial speech, rich in harmless grousing, so that we feel in touch with a cross-section of our Army. And yet these variations of frank dialectic conversation are knit together by a common simplicity of good intention and a spontaneous assumption of co-operation. There is no competition for leadership, only the need to solve a common problem in a crisis. The little book is suffused with the spirit of the democratic personality. Its presence is the living of an ideal which does not need to be verbalized. These men know that this is "their war"; and if they go to their death with somewhat of the blinding ecstasy that is appropriate to victory, it is because they have already won that harder victory in their pulling themselves together to the end they find good.

Behind it there were two more explosions, and somewhere in the next world Rivera's finger was on the trigger of his gun and he was singing.

They were all singing. All of them.

"It is so easy," Tyne said aloud as he ran.
"It is so terribly easy."

What Corporal Tyne finds so easy at the end is neither victory nor death, though he has victory in mind and is accurately describing the approach of

his own death. He is really summing up his awareness of the whole process of integration that has preceded, in the glow of which, to his surprise, to act effectively no longer is a problem.

For the plainest instance of the effect of the western front upon our writers, we must return to John Hersey. Completely nonpolitical in his earlier work, in *A Bell for Adano* he becomes the most politically minded author the front-line foxholes have yet produced. In this story of the occupation of liberated territory, Major Joppolo's desire to restore democracy to the Italian town of Adano is frustrated by the indifference of our high command. When the respect for social rank leads his fellow-officers to continue Fascists in office, partly because he is of Italian descent, Major Joppolo can understand the attitude of the people; and, believing that this is a democratic war, he tries to satisfy their demands for bread and justice. Through his tact he secures the support of certain of his fellow-officers and succeeds in restoring the bell removed by the Nazis that has symbolized the loved familiar routine of the old community life. But he is transferred by an angry superior before he has accomplished anything more practical, save bringing a few Fascists temporarily into detention.

A Bell for Adano excels as an appealing presentation of the problems of the occupation. It is filled with the same affection for common people, respect for their folk wisdom, recognition of the integrity of their culture, that was presented with such distinction in Elliot Paul's *Life and Death of a Spanish Town*. We drink wine with the family of the fisherman. We are amused at the pettiness of certain local problems. We are outraged at the snobbishness of certain of our American naval officers. Hersey

works upon the springs of generosity in us with so frank an assumption of our democratic intention that we cannot leave the book without a sense of indignation that our occupation seemed designed to restore privilege rather than promote the welfare of the masses. And this is probably enough to ask of a book in wartime. Nevertheless, when we are thinking of the quality of the writing, the book, it must be admitted, verges upon the superficiality of the picturesque. Hersey has not identified as deeply with his Italians as he was able to do with his marines. His conscious intention has been in the right direction, but it has not yet affected those deeper elements of the personality which are the source of the writer's creative power.

A Bell for Adano is probably the most widely read of all our fiction of the front-line trenches. Its popularity reflects the demand of the public for a fiction which goes beyond the sensational and is aware that this is a war for the popular good, wherever it is fought. There is a reciprocity of influence between a writer and the public. It is to be expected that the popularity of this novel will have its share in stimulating a more profound

insight. The literature of the French underground, about which we are beginning to have information in this country, is proof that it can be done; as, indeed, already has been shown by the work of German refugees in America, such as Anna Seghers, Bodo Uhse, and Franz Weiskopf. We Americans are alive to literary values as never before. This present war has gripped the attention of our writers more powerfully than any previous national crisis. If their response has for the most part been the honest description of the surface of events, as we ourselves become aware of the deeper issues, we may expect the writers to respond. The tragedy of fascism has evoked an adequate response in writers of nationalities which have most directly felt it. As we fight nearer to our goal and ourselves grow into a more serious understanding, we may trust our writers to deepen it still further. They may be trusted to articulate for us the growth into a more profound conviction of the war's meaning in our soldiers as they cast their votes under the gunfire of the enemy or lead away to shelter the maimed and helpless victims of fascism.

The Metaphysics of Thomas Wolfe

MONROE M. STEARNS¹

WHEN into the world there come those *reine kinder Gottes*, as Goethe called individuals of genius, the greatest wonder is in what field they will exhibit their heavenly gift. Psychology provides an answer, and from a study of many cases it may be inferred that if the man of

genius finds it difficult to adjust his personality to the world and discover therein an easy spiritual survival, it is an artist that he becomes. On the other hand, if such an adjustment is—or is made—easy for him, he becomes a scientist and regards the world as a passive victim rather than as an active enemy. Be he artist or scientist, however, he has

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but one aim, namely, to benefit the world as he finds it; as the one to interpret its spiritual abstractions; as the other to solve its physical enigmas.

The creative artist is necessarily subjective and egocentric. Since he feels rather than reasons, expression is necessary to him as the release of a tension occasioned by his sense of enmity with the world; and the stronger this hostility, the more violently it is released. Furthermore, because his mission of interpretation requires the medium of his own personality, he states things as they appear to him, realizing that truth among abstractions is a matter of opinion, and consequently he both consciously and unconsciously identifies himself with any hero-character he may create.

This identification of himself with his hero is the key to the personality problem of the most recent of geniuses in America, Thomas Wolfe. So many of Wolfe's characters, settings, and incidents can be identified with actual ones in his own life that it is safe to say there is no figure, place, or action in his works that had not its living analogue. Wolfe's egocentricity supersaturates his novels and his short stories. Facing him was the problem of some kind of sublimation, since he had chosen fiction as his medium of release. In search of a guide or a model for this sublimation he turned to the founders of English Romantic poetry, the metaphysical Coleridge and Wordsworth; but the process was not so simple as that. Its causes were long and obscure.

There are three stages through which the artist passes on his journey toward personal adjustment to the world. The first is his idea of God as a void, especially conspicuous in America because of the prevalence of the old frontier attitude toward any of the forms of art. The second stage is the idea of God as the

enemy. The first produces in the artist the sense of being an orphan and an outcast; the second produces the sense of being a rebel. Wolfe gives signs of having reached the second stage only at the close of his career. The third stage, that of God the friend, representing complete assimilation into the world and adjustment with it, he never attained.

Deep-seated in the hypersensitive organism of the artist is his relationship with his mother. Perhaps in the process of Wolfe's growth no period was so hazardous to the child's emotional stability as the period of weaning. This is the point at which the physical relationship of the child with his mother is severed and lost. Within the womb the child has found shelter and nourishment. After the exclusion from this magic circle of protection the nursing period equals the sustenance and seclusion of the womb. Then comes the painfulness of consciousness and of establishing a communication with the world by language, gesture, and every other articulate or inarticulate means. Alone in a world he never made, the child struggles to gain his emotional equilibrium, even as he struggles to get his balance when learning to walk. If the weaning period is tactfully and intelligently managed, the shock of having to sustain himself is lessened for the infant; but, should the opposite obtain, the child experiences a frantic sense of rejection and abandonment.

In the case of Thomas Wolfe, his accurately autobiographical novels, his letters, and his mother's own words serve as indisputable evidence of this experience. Wolfe's descriptions of his mother are perfect. In real life she has the same pursing lips, the same gestures, and the same speech. Her attitude to a visitor is that he does not exist, so absorbed is she in her own businesses and

in her own talk. She is a hoarder, her house full of ugly objects. In *Look Homeward, Angel* she is represented as so engrossed in her speculations with real estate and money-making that her family become a nuisance and a hindrance rather than a vital concern. Not only would this attitude produce a psychological feeling of rejection on her youngest child through her lack of motherly empathy and her inability to see the world from the child's point of view, but the fact that she refused to wean Thomas until he was three and a half years old would make that process far more difficult than if it had been accomplished when the child was an infant. It caused a spiritual wound from which he never recovered. The petting which Mrs. Wolfe bestowed on her youngest son in the presence of others was to his sensitive nature but a show of affection. "Naked and alone we came into exile. In her dark womb we did not know our mother's face; from the prison of her flesh have we come into the unspeakable and incommunicable prison of this earth." So Wolfe introduces his story of a buried life.

The hopeless rejection of Wolfe by his mother caused him later to regard all the women he was to love as food-producers. In real life, for example, Elinor in *Of Time and the River* is an experienced and accomplished cook who studied cookery in France with a leading chef. Esther Jack, of the last two novels, also holds her power over George Webber-Wolfe by her succulent dishes. Her prototype is a woman so fond of cooking that her idea of relaxation is to go into her kitchen and prepare Sunday lunch for twenty or thirty guests. Food and its consumption figure in Wolfe's novels more often than any other pleasure.

After this rejection, what next can the

child do? Gathering its energies into itself, it loves itself. In normal cases, however, this solution is unsatisfactory, and a counterreaction takes place. Having rejected its mother, the child now rejects itself. The possibility remains, nevertheless, of a relationship with the father, who in the home and the family symbolizes God in the universe.

Between Wolfe and his father there were several similarities. Both were gargantuan individuals, devoted to excess in their uses of food, liquor, and women; both were hampered by the petty, irritating conventions of smaller people, conceiving of themselves as Gullivers among Lilliputians. The experience of having had such a father was a great factor in the development of Wolfe's personality. Like William James, Wolfe was the son of a talkative father but was himself a confused talker. The torrent of the father's words leads the son on to find out what he is talking about and to make some order out of his father's thought philosophically or artistically.

Whereas Wolfe, like any child, had first sought for a mother and all the connotations of that word, now he sought for a father. He thought of himself as searching for one. "The deepest search in life, it seemed to me," he wrote in *The Story of a Novel*, "the thing that in one way or another was central to all living was man's search to find a father . . . the image of a strength and wisdom external to his need and superior to his hunger, to which the belief and power of his own life could be united." The search for security is now directed to the male figure, a father-substitute. William Oliver Wolfe, however, was a socially irresponsible man, both actually and as he is represented in the novels of his son. He was a semioutcast, and Thomas Wolfe's identification of himself with

him tended to make the author even more of an outcast than he had already felt himself to be. The introductory paragraphs of *Look Homeward, Angel* already quoted are primarily concerned with the mother, but the intention includes the father and the search for him as well.

The Ishmaelitish character of Wolfe's personality derives also from his revulsion at the environment of his childhood. There is little reason to suppose that Mrs. Wolfe's house now is very different from what it was in the early years of the century, when Wolfe was young. His birthplace near the railroad track is small, grayish, and dirty. The tiny plot of land around it has a run-down look. The trees are meager, the whole scale ungenerous. With no respect for or love of nature shown, it narrowly misses squalor. The boarding-house, about four minutes' walk away, though larger than the birthplace, is nevertheless small, and its corridors and rooms are small. It is hemmed in by other houses. Within there is no sense of order or tidiness. Everywhere the accumulation of dust makes it dingy and smelly, and ugly bric-a-brac of the Pullman period renders it far from charming. Asheville itself is a horrid town in a setting of great natural beauty. Commerical interests have cheapened and vulgarized it. On the mind of Wolfe a fundamental disgust at this lack of physical beauty around him produced a revulsion which intensified the orphan outcast in his soul. "It has taken me 27 (*sic*) years," he wrote in 1927, "to rise above the bitterness and hatred of my childhood."

The rejection of the child by his family and the repulsion caused by his environment are likely to release themselves in a story that takes the form of a pilgrimage or odyssey. It is thus no

coincidence that one of the chapters in *Of Time and the River* is entitled "Tele-machus," and another, "Jason's Voyage." This is perhaps the simplest of Wolfe's symbols.

Long before Wolfe had embarked on his semifictionalized autobiography, he had found the secret of releasing his feelings of rejection and revulsion, and he had found it in the metaphysical Wordsworth and Coleridge. "I would rather listen to Coleridge," he said, "who comes to me sometimes in dreams, shadowy in a darkened room, sitting at a piano, looking at me—and like me." Again he speaks of his love for "all weird fable and wild invention" and of "Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the chief prince of the moon and magic." *The Ancient Mariner* was to become his favorite poem, and from it he was to quote directly countless times or weave its words among his own. What is *The Ancient Mariner* but voyage—odyssey—literature—the journey of an outcast soul to find its salvation through tortuous atonement? In 1931 Wolfe wrote to his colleague at New York University, Henry Volkening, that his next book was to be called "Penance More."² The mariner Wolfe had done penance for living thus long, and telling the further chronicle of his life was to be a punishment for him like the expiation of the crime of Coleridge's mariner.

And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

In Coleridge, Wolfe found the means of expression by which he could sublimate his feelings. The subjective writer finds a perfect model in the figure of the Romantic genius, and out of the books in

² Cf. *The Ancient Mariner*: "The man hath penance done, And penance more will do" (ll. 408-9).

which he finds him he remembers and uses that material which also exists in himself and which relates to his own problems.

The Romantic attitude which Wolfe took toward his own life is so similar to Coleridge's in parts that the question might arise as to how much Wolfe is being sincere and how much he is deliberately imitating Coleridge. Both were the youngest of large families. Coleridge describes himself as his mother's darling, a precocious and imaginative boy, taking no pleasure in boyish sports but reading incessantly, especially in imaginative literature. Wolfe's account of his own childhood is almost identical.

There is a passage in *Look Homeward, Angel* in which the young Eugene Gant-Wolfe looked up misty-eyed in the growing dark from the last page of a sensational novel and concluded: "Yes, this was as it should be. This was what he would have done." Later, during the first World War, he read Hankey's *A Student in Arms*, and

he became a member of this legion of chivalry—young Galahad-Eugene—a spearhead of righteousness. . . . With glistening eyes he read his own epilogue, enjoyed his post-mortem glory, as his last words were recorded and explained by his editor. Then, witness of his own martyrdom, he dropped two smoking tears upon his young slain body.

The escape from reality which the child enjoyed was the seed of the power Wolfe possessed of making himself one with whatever person he was reading or writing about. Furthermore, both boys were petted by one of their brothers: Coleridge, by his brother George; Wolfe, by the famous Ben. Both apotheosized this brother. Coleridge, for instance, writes "To the Rev. George Coleridge":

Yet at times

My soul is sad that I have roamed through life
Still most a stranger, most with naked heart

At mine own home and birthplace; chiefly then
When I remember thee, my earliest friend,

.

He who counts alone

The beatings of the solitary heart,
That Being knows, how I have loved thee ever,
Loved as a brother, as a son revered thee.

Wolfe wrote to his mother in 1927: "Strangers we were born alone into a strange world. We live in it, as Ben did alone and strange, and we are without ever knowing anyone." In 1926 he had written: "In our family Ben was the stranger until his death—I suppose I'm the other one." The dithyrambic rhapsodies of Eugene over Ben in Wolfe's novel expand these statements and raise them into poetry of a higher order than these lines of Coleridge. Coleridge taught Wolfe how to see and how to feel and how to express what he saw and felt. "I have not discovered for myself . . . any obscure poet with the genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," he wrote in *Of Time and the River*. "To me he is not one of the great English poets. He is The Poet."

The Platonic doctrines of the pre-existence of the soul and of the realm of the absolutes were what haunted Wordsworth, and Coleridge flew even further into the other world with his absorption of the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus and Iamblichus. Wordsworth expresses his faith most definitely in "My heart leaps up" and in the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," but he soon passed into the third stage of artistic development and became reconciled with his world. This Coleridge never managed to accomplish, and his entire output—both prose and poetry—is the record of his sublimation of a life of physical and mental torture in the Plotinian "flight of the alone to the alone."

Wolfe became acquainted with the

two poets in the little private school to which he devotes many pages and much tribute in *Look Homeward, Angel*. Mrs. Leonard (Mrs. Roberts) there taught him English literature. "The shorter Wordsworth pieces he had read at grammar school . . . but Margaret [Leonard-Roberts] read him the sonnets and made him commit 'The World is too much with us' to memory." Twenty years later he could explode in uninhibited conversation about the "getting and spending" of America. It was through this early familiarity with Wordsworth that Wolfe found one path to his escape. A thorough familiarity it was, and another identification of himself with his author-model. When in Book III of *The Prelude* Wordsworth writes of his eye

Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf,
To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars
Could find no surface where its power might
sleep;

Wolfe recognized the similarity of the poet's emotion to his own and appropriated Wordsworth's phrase for his own motto of "a stone, a leaf, a door," by which he could express the psychological pains of birth. The loss of relationship with his protector-mother is symbolized for Wolfe in Wordsworth's nostalgia for that spiritual home whence comes the soul trailing its clouds of glory. Life thus became to Wolfe a penance for the sin of having been born and having left that apocalyptic world of Plato, Plotinus, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, in which the soul knows its true nature and is free.

When Wolfe was to continue the tale of his life, Wordsworth also helped him. Again Wolfe shows his intimacy with the poet's less familiar lines, and the key to *Of Time and the River* is the last of Wordsworth's sonnet sequence, *The Riv-*

er Duddon. At the beginning of the "Tele-machus" section of this novel Wolfe writes of himself: "His father was dead and now it seemed to him that he had never found him. His father was dead, and yet he sought him everywhere." And the rest of the novel has as its theme these lines of Wordsworth:

AFTER-THOUGHT

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have
power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's tran-
scendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

The point of view of the professional metaphysician is different from that of the artist; the artist treats metaphysics as being helpful to life. Thus the definite subjectivity of Wolfe's personality brought the other world away from a distinct existence into one continually interwoven with his own. The very use that he makes of physical metaphors demonstrates his willingness to see this world on a physical level. He accepts the symbolism of the world and nature as Wordsworth and Coleridge did. He does not—and perhaps cannot—impersonalize his problems, as might a Catholic writer, through priest or character sublimation.

Without a knowledge of the total environment of an author, his intention cannot be completely understood, nor can the entire meaning of his communications be perceived. The terms Wolfe

uses in recurring refrains are symbols of other things than their direct referents. Thus "home" is not only the Asheville boarding-house of Wolfe's childhood or a prenatal uterine existence; the word is also used in the Wordsworthian sense for God. The search for a father becomes, as well, a search for God. The "door" is the entrance both back to the protective maternal womb and to the heaven from which, in the Platonic doctrine, we in our essence come. The "stone, leaf, door" refrain symbolizes not only the pain of birth but also those tokens (like Wordsworth's rainbow, rose, tree, and pansy) which remind the mortal of his immortal nature. The "lost and by the wind-grieved ghost" corresponds to the sense of the pre-existence of the soul, which vanishes as the individual advances in material time down the river of corporeal existence.

It is significant in this connection that Wordsworth, too, had a brother, symbolizing for him, as Ben did for Wolfe, man's brotherhood with man, and that John Wordsworth died during the period that elapsed between the composition of the first fifty-seven lines of the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" and the lines which begin "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," which Wolfe took as the interpretation and meaning of his own life.

The events and the spirit of Wolfe's own lifetime correspond rather closely

to those of the period of Wordsworth and Coleridge. As they lamented the materialism, the skepticism, the regimentation, and the conservatism of their day, and put their faith in the elemental goodness and spiritual inheritance of the individual man, so Wolfe's higher purpose is to lead America out of the confusion and disillusionment of the years following the outbreak of the first World War. His father-search becomes universalized in the common quest for a substitute for the autocratic character of the home—with the father as autocrat—which was then disappearing. Motivated by the same complexes, Wolfe uses the same methods that his poets did in rescuing his generation from the futility of its existence. As they were a link between an old world and a new one, so Wolfe, in following them, becomes a bridge from our world of the past to a new future, and thus he takes his place in the great stream of Anglo-Saxon thought and literature, which has stressed democracy since the time of *Beowulf*.

Thomas Wolfe preaches a return to the natural man, exalts the dignity and beauty of human nature, reaffirms man's divinity and purpose, and restores to his readers thereby a sense of their own value and importance. Like all tragedy, the tragedy of Wolfe's life as he records it purifies and restores the ideals of his readers which else would languish for want of sufficient illustration.

Brother Jonathan

ROBERT WITHINGTON¹

MANY travelers have described, more or less accurately, the countries they have visited, commenting on the scenes, the people, the manners and customs, the national psychology, and the habits which have particularly struck them. We can still read with interest and profit the character of John Bull, which Washington Irving, whom Thackeray calls the first Ambassador sent by the New World of Letters to the Old, drew in his *Sketch Book* almost a hundred and twenty-five years ago; and we can read with profit, if not with equal satisfaction, the thoughtful characterizations of our country made by various visitors to our land.

In 1831, a French observer, De Tocqueville, came to the United States; and the results of his observations appeared in *Democracy in America*, which was published in 1835. We may wonder if we have changed much in the intervening years. Are we still dominated by the "tyranny of the majority," concerning which he writes?

I regard this maxim as impious and detestable, that in matters of government the majority of a people has the right to do everything—and yet I place in the will of the majority the origin of all power. Am I guilty of self-contradiction?

There is a general law which has been made, or at least adopted, not only by the majority of a given country, but by the majority of all men. This law is justice. Justice, therefore, forms the limit of the law of each people.

A nation is like a jury charged with repre-

senting universal society, and with applying that justice which is its law. Should the jury, which represents society, have more power than the society itself whose laws it administers?

When, therefore, I refuse to obey an unjust law, I do not deny to the majority the right to command; I appeal from the sovereignty of the nation to the sovereignty of the human race.

There are people who are not afraid to say that a nation, in matters which concern only itself, cannot get entirely away from the boundaries of justice and reason, and that therefore one should not fear to give full power to the majority which represents it. But this is the language of a slave.

Just what is a majority, taken collectively, but an individual who has opinions—and very often interests—opposed to another individual whom we call the minority? Now, if you admit that a man clothed with omnipotence can abuse this power against his adversaries, why don't you admit the same thing for a majority? Have men in uniting with others changed their characters? Have they become more patient with obstacles in becoming stronger? I cannot believe it; and the power to do everything, which I refuse to a single one of my fellows, I shall never grant to several. . . .

That which I hold most against democratic government, such as has been organized in the United States, is not (as many Europeans believe) its weakness, but, on the contrary, its irresistible strength. And what disgusts me most in America is not the extreme liberty which reigns there—it is the small guarantee which one finds there against tyranny.

When a man or a party suffers injustice in the United States, to whom can he address himself? To public opinion? That forms the majority. To the Legislature? That represents the majority and obeys it blindly. To the executive power? It is elected by the majority, and serves it as a passive instrument. To the military forces? The military forces are only the majority under arms. To the jury? The jury is the majority clothed with power to pronounce judgment. The judges themselves in certain

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States are elected by the majority. However iniquitous or unreasonable is the measure which hits you, you have to submit to it.

Of the power which the majority in America exercises on thought, De Tocqueville says:

I do not know any country where in general there reigns less independence of spirit and real liberty of discussion than in America. There is no religious or political theory which one cannot freely preach in the constitutional states of Europe and which does not penetrate to the others, for there is no country so dominated by a single power that he who wishes to speak the truth there cannot find a support capable of protecting him from the results of his independence [this was written before the days of Hitler]. . . . But at the heart of an organized democracy like that of the United States, there is but one power, one element of strength and success, and nothing outside of it.

In America, the majority draws a formidable circle around thought. Within these limits a writer is free, but woe to him if he dares to step outside of them! He does not have to fear a public burning, an "auto-da-fé," but he is exposed to all kinds of mortification and persecution. . . . Under the government of an absolute monarch, despotism, to reach the soul, strikes ruthlessly at the body; and the soul, escaping these blows, rises gloriously above the flesh; but in democratic republics tyranny does not act like this at all. She leaves the body and goes straight for the soul. The master does not say, "You will think like me or you will die." He says, "You are at liberty to disagree with me; your life, your property, remain yours; but from this day you are a stranger among us. You will keep your privileges as a citizen, but they will become useless to you; for if you solicit the votes of your fellow-citizens, they won't give them to you, and if you ask only their esteem they will pretend to refuse it. You will remain among men, but you will lose your human rights. When you approach your fellows, they will fly from you as from an unclean being, and those who believe in your innocence, even those will abandon you, for people would fly from them, in their turn. Go in peace; I leave you life; but I give you what is worse than death." . . .

It is always stimulating, though not always agreeable, to see ourselves as

others see us. Does it seem possible that the above sentences were penned more than a century ago? Or have we cast off the "tyranny of the majority," which the penetrating analysis and shrewd appreciation of the French traveler called to our attention in 1835? Was he prejudiced and unfair? Philarète Chasles, professor in the Collège de France, makes some pertinent remarks:

Public opinion, and the press, its minister and slave, have made extraordinary ravages and accomplished incredible usurpation in the United States. It appears that every people have need of a tyrant, and that the laws of humanity require it to submit to power, as the law of power seems to require abuse. The Americans, professors of democratic principles, have created a power of opinion to which they submit. This power is abused. As the nation chooses it, she also encourages it. Armed with a journal, that is, with a battery of opinion, you can pilage and assassinate with impunity. For instance, the horrible case of the murderer Colt, who was several times reprieved by journal-interference, and at last committed suicide.

Some citizens of the States who have had the courage to tell the truth have incurred real danger. "Where," cries an American, "shall the free thinker take refuge? To speak unreservedly of any country, must we establish a press in some desert island? or beside the Pole? The facility and rapidity of communication seem to have repressed rather than encouraged the independence of ideas, and soon one will recognize with astonishment that typography, that second Word of humanity, has been like speech, given but to conceal thought." The independent thinkers who have dared to write thus, true heroes of moral courage, Clay, Webster, Channing, Cooper, and Garrison, should be cited with honor. . . .

It is strange that the government of masses do [*sic*] not develop mental liberty; it strangles it and for a mathematical reason. When all have rights over us, he who detaches himself from the mass offends all. You cannot unite originality with equality. Elegance, exactitude, magniloquence, affectation may get along with such a position, but humor and liberty, never. . . .²

² *Anglo-American Literature and Manners*, translated and published by Scribner (1852), Sec. VI, p. 176.

The American sense of humor, on which we have long prided ourselves, does not seem to have struck the foreign observer particularly; few of them mention it. In 1832, the year which saw the Reform Bill in England, the death of Scott and of Goethe and (some critics will say) of the first "Romantic Period" of the nineteenth century, Mrs. Frances Trollope published her *Domestic Manners of the Americans*—an "ill-natured and prejudiced narrative of her life in America," it has been called. One can hardly apply these adjectives to many of the French observations and comments on the United States, though many travelers note our crudities and shortcomings. One Count de Fersen, who came to America with Rochambeau, wrote his father some of his impressions in 1782.

They fleece us pitilessly; the price of everything is exorbitant; in all the dealings that we have had with them they treat us more like enemies than friends. Their cupidity is unequalled; money is their God; virtue, honor, seem nothing to them compared with the precious metal. I do not mean that there are no estimable people, whose character is equally noble and generous: there are many such—but I speak of the nation in general. Money is the prime mover of all their actions; they think only of means to gain it; each is for himself, and none for the public good. . . .

Does this show "prejudice"? It might echo letters sent home by the A.E.F. in 1917 and 1918, and may suggest difficulties which are likely to arise between the citizens of the United Nations when the present war is over. No one, not even the French, likes to be attacked in the pocketbook; and we might ask ourselves if the dollar is almightier than the franc—or the shilling.

Dickens, in 1842, reported what he saw here, in his *American Notes*, and was just without being unduly unkind,

though he was no flatterer. The next year, in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (the centenary of which we note), he was less kind, and (we like to think) less just. We may hope that the majority of Americans whom young Martin met on this side of the water were not typical of our compatriots of the eighteen-forties—we might almost say, of our ancestors!—but in the sixteenth chapter of his novel, Dickens makes some comments which we may well ponder in this year of grace:

. . . Dollars! All their cares, hopes, joys, affections, virtues, and associations seemed to be melted down into dollars. Whatever the chance contributions that fell into the slow cauldron of their talk, they made the gruel thick and slab with dollars. Men were weighed by their dollars, measures gauged by their dollars; life was auctioneered, appraised, put up, and knocked down for its dollars. The next respectable thing to dollars was any venture having their attainment for its end. The more of that worthless ballast, honour and fair-dealing, which any man cast overboard from the ship of his Good Name and Good Intent, the more ample stowage-room he had for dollars. Make commerce one huge lie and mighty theft. Deface the banner of the nation for an idle rag, pollute it star by star, and cut out stripe by stripe as from the arm of a degraded soldier. Do anything for dollars! What is a flag to *them*?

Harsh words, these. Does one, as he reads them, think of our labor leaders, our farm bloc, and our associations of manufacturers? Is the self-seeking exemplified by Hitler unknown in our land? Do we still talk and live in terms of dollars? And are there no Scrooges, no Mr. Dombey's, or Fascination Fledgebys left in England? no Montague Tiggs, no Mr. Merdles?

Martin meets Mr. Bevan in this chapter, and the latter makes some remarks about Colonel Diver:

He is one of a class of men in whom our own Franklin, so long ago as ten years before the close of the last century [Franklin died in 1790] foresaw our danger and disgrace. Perhaps you

don't know that Franklin, in very severe terms, published his opinion that those who were slandered by such fellows as this colonel, having no sufficient remedy in the administration of this country's laws or in the decent and right-minded feeling of its people, were justified in retorting on such public nuisance by means of a stout cudgel?

Martin was not aware of that and suggested: "...it may have required great courage, even in his time, to write freely on any question which was not a party one in this very free country." To which Mr. Bevan replied:

"You are right. So very right, that I believe no satirist could breathe this air. If another Juvenal or Swift could rise up among us tomorrow, he would be hunted down. If you have any knowledge of our literature, and can give me the name of any man, American born and bred, who has anatomized our follies as a people, and not this or that party, and has escaped the foulest and most brutal slander, the most inveterate hatred and intolerant pursuit, it will be a strange name in my ears, believe me. In some cases I could name to you, where a native writer has ventured on the most harmless and good-humoured illustrations of our vices and defects, it has been found necessary to announce that in a second edition the passage has been expunged, or altered, or explained away, or patched into praise."

It was perhaps to men like this, his new companion, that a traveller of honoured name, who trod these shores now nearly forty years ago, and woke upon that soil, as many have done since, to blots and stains upon its high pretensions, which in the brightness of his distant dreams were lost to view, appealed in these words—

Oh, but for such, Columbia's days were done;
Rank without ripeness, quickened without sun,
Crude at the surface, rotten at the core,
Her fruits would fall before her spring were
o'er!³

³ The verses were written about 1803 by Thomas Moore and may be found among the "Poems Relating to America," from lines addressed to "The Honourable W. R. Spencer from Buffalo, upon Lake Erie." Here Moore pays tribute to Joseph Dennie, editor of the *Port-Folio*, published at Philadelphia; if he sees in him an exception, he regards the American people, as a whole, as deficient in morals as they are in manners.

Jefferson Brick has given way to the high-minded journalists of our time, and satirists like Sinclair Lewis and the Elmer Davis of *Show Window* have arisen among us and been, on the whole, well received. The second editions of their books have not been revised, altered, expunged, or patched into praise, which is perhaps proof of André Siegfried's suggestion that we have come of age. But have the weaknesses which De Tocqueville, Chasles, and Dickens noted been outgrown? The elder Holmes was not blind to them, though those staunch patriots, the Autocrat and the Professor, had not been created in 1843; if he thought us "crude at the surface," he was not willing to admit that we were "rotten at the core."

We hear much, in these days, about the American "way of life," which we are fighting to preserve. Is it the life described by Dickens, or the spirit analyzed by De Tocqueville and Chasles? Has Jefferson's faith in the common people been misplaced? Have the sacrifices of our forefathers been in vain, and was the hope that brought immigrants overseas an illusory one? Have we, in seeking to save our life, lost it? Have we learned the lessons which Munich and Paris might have taught us? We are told that our readiness to abandon our associates in 1919—to sink back into our isolationism—has bred a distrust of us on the part of our present allies (who can have no suspicions of our fighting forces); do they think that our politicians regard honor and fair dealing as "worthless ballast" and that they are ready to deface our flag for dollars? When one sees the high-minded officials at Washington today, such a supposition is patently absurd.

Are we not willing to argue that no class puts its interest before that of the

nation as a whole? Do we not show a readiness to co-operate—not only with other countries which are fighting to preserve their existence, to protect themselves from a terror undreamed-of in the nineteenth century, but also with our compatriots who recognize the threat of dictatorship and what it would mean to our institutions? We understand that “co-operation” must become the watchword of the age that is waiting before, if humanity is to survive as free.

Of course, we know that we are not a selfish people; that there is no danger of any class putting self-interest before the common good; that if we do not all fight inflation by keeping prices and wages down we shall all be ruined; that the war effort must not be hindered by any strike which will imperil our national existence; that labor leaders are public spirited, seeking no personal gain or unjust advantages for any group. We are aware that farmers will not let us starve for the sake of immediate profits and that manufacturers will not fight for trade barriers which will hamper the free flow of goods after the war and perhaps sow the seeds of future conflicts more devastating than this. We pay more than lip service to justice, honor, and tolerance; we never play politics—as Nero played the violin—in the face of a mundane holocaust; we do not appease the grabbers in our midst—we are so generous that there are no grabbers—and dollars are the last things we think of. We have many public servants (not bureaucrats) in Washington, giving the people an object lesson in co-operation, striving to outdo each other in unselfish service to the nation, without any petty interoffice jealousies. We emphasize duties rather than rights, and have no concern with adequate rewards for our labors. We are anxious to give and care nothing about

getting; in short, none of the faults which were noted by foreigners in the last century have persisted. We no longer boast; we are modest, almost to the point of developing an inferiority complex (a term unknown to Dickens and Thackeray); and we are delighted to have our faults pointed out to us, that we may correct the few we still have. We regard other races as our peers, and when we express our belief that all men are created equal, we mean that the next man is as good as we are.

No politician would sacrifice the general good for another term in office. There is no tyrant in this country—not even Public Opinion. It takes no courage to express one’s view, even if it does not happen to be that held by the majority, for we are sympathetic to the views we do not hold, and are always ready to be convinced when we are in the wrong. No one is more willing to admit his mistakes than is the American, once he has been shown the error of his ways; independence of spirit and freedom of discussion reign unchecked from Maine to California and are welcomed everywhere. Our manners have improved also; we are courteous as we have always been hospitable, and we are never so hurried that we have no time to be thoughtful of others. Our sense of humor never deserts us, because we always keep our sense of proportion. We see things in the larger aspect of history, which is never distorted in our textbooks. We know that ultimate good is preferable to immediate advantage, which often has to be sacrificed to it; and we do what we know to be right, without regard to what others may think or say.

In our humility we realize that we are not perfect; we admit that we have a few gangsters—that not all of our politicians are as honest as we might

wish; but we are gradually eliminating these from our life and are sure that before long there will be none left. We send our best men to Congress and take an honest pride in our legislators' clear thinking, integrity, and devotion to the country as a whole—their scorn of local patronage and their unwillingness to grant favors to a section or organized group of constituents. The Cabinet is made up of highly polished presidential timber, and no one is concerned, for purely partisan reasons, with maintaining himself in office or seeking to replace a present excellent incumbent.

But in Dickens' day it was different. When Martin and Mark were bound for Eden, there happened to be on board the steamboat several gentlemen passengers of the same stamp as Martin's New York friend, Mr. Bevan, and in their society young Mr. Chuzzlewit was cheerful and happy.

They . . . exhibited, in all they said and did, so much good sense and high feeling that he could not like them too well. "If this were a republic of Intellect and Worth," he said, "instead of vapouring and jobbing, they would not want the levers to keep it in motion."

"Having good tools and using bad ones," returned Mr. Tapley, "would look as if they was rather a poor sort of carpenters, sir, wouldn't it?"

Martin nodded. "As if their work were infinitely above their powers and purpose, Mark, and they botched it in consequence."

"The best on it is," said Mark, "that when they do happen to make a decent stroke—such as better workmen, with no such opportunities, make every day of their lives and think nothing of—they begin to sing out so surprising loud. Take notice of my words, sir. If ever the defaulting part of this here country pays its debts—along of finding that not paying 'em won't do in a commercial point of view, you see, and is inconvenient in its consequences—they'll take such a shine out of it, and make such bragging speeches, that a man might suppose no borrowed money had ever been paid afore, since the world was first begun. That's

the way they gammon with each other, sir. Bless you, I know 'em. Take notice of my words, now!"

We need not quote Dickens' comments on our taste, a century ago. Now our taste is impeccable. We do not like jazz, except in our lighter moments, and jitterbugs are exotic excrescences at which we laugh good-humoredly. Our cinema is never cheap, and we are proud to have it interpret our civilization to foreign countries. We read only the best books—no other nation is so thoroughly grounded in the classics. We tolerate the "funnies" for the sake of our younger children, who soon lose their taste for such crude wit, and develop a fondness for high comedy and satire—the more delicate, the better. Our college students devote themselves to their work—nothing is less like a country club than our institutions of higher learning—and if they give grudgingly a little time to athletics and social pleasures, they do so that they may return to library, lecture, and laboratory with renewed zest. One might, perhaps, regret that they do not take more real pleasure in their relaxation—that they regard it almost entirely as a duty, as do their elders, who cannot forget the adage about work and play and who fear dulness as they fear the devil.

We have left our crude past behind us, as Dickens expected us to do. Arriving in New York from Eden, Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley took a return passage on the "Screw," Mark getting the job of ship's cook. Anchor weighed; ship in full sail:

"Why, Cook, what are you thinking of so steadily?" said Martin.

"Why, I was a-thinking, sir," returned Mark, "that if I was a painter, and was called upon to paint the American Eagle, how should I do it?"

"Paint it as like an Eagle as you could, I suppose."

"No," said Mark; "that wouldn't do for me, sir. I should want to draw it like a Bat, for its short-sightedness; like a Bantam, for its bragging; like a Magpie, for its honesty; like a Peacock, for its vanity; like an Ostrich, for putting its head in the mud, and thinking nobody sees it—"

"And like a Phoenix, for its power of springing from the ashes of its faults and vices, and soaring up anew into the sky!" said Martin. "Well, Mark, let us hope so."

On this optimistic note, the travelers went back to the England of Seth Pecksniff, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Sairey Gamp, and of John Westlock, Thomas Pinch, Mary Graham—not sorry to see the last of Jefferson Brick, Zephaniah Scadder, Mrs. Hominy, and Elijah Pogram, but grateful to Mr. Bevan, whose kindness

still sheds a light on his compatriots. Is our national bird a composite of bat, bantam, magpie, peacock, ostrich—and phoenix? There are villains and kindly human creatures on both sides of the Atlantic, now as then, as Brother Jonathan knows and will bear in mind when he approaches the council table at the end of the war. For Brother Jonathan has grown up—he has attained his majority, as a recent French observer has noted. He is no longer the *enfant terrible* which travelers of a hundred years ago made him out to be. Young Martin Chuzzlewit was not happy in his Eden—but we shall see to it that we are, in ours. We are even willing to lead the United Nations toward the perfection we have all but attained: none for himself and all for the public good.

English for Ex-service Personnel

A Survey Conducted by "College English"

THE following quotation is on the whole fairly representative of the majority opinion:

I do not think the service men will want or need, in many cases, a host of new courses. If the English courses are already human, as I hope ours are, if they emphasize the spiritual and thought content of literature, the ideals and human aspirations; and if the teachers are honest, tolerant, idealistic, sympathetic men and women, we don't need a lot of planning about what to present or how to present it. If said teachers are not honest, tolerant, idealistic, and sympathetic, it won't do much good to plan and plan. There will, doubtless, be psychopathic cases, but such cases should be treated in special institutions, not thrown in with normal, mixed groups. There seems to be a tendency to look upon the returned soldier, as some parents look upon their children, as a problem that needs special modes and machinery; whereas all that is needed is for teacher or parent to

go right along with everyday living, adjusting themselves to personal reactions as they arise. Sympathy and understanding are the key words—organized sympathy and understanding will turn out phony.

I have a boy in France, and I know many of his pals who are there; I know they won't come back (if they come back) without some mental as well as physical scars. They will have seen sights that they never should have seen and will have gone through hell perhaps, but man can go through hell physically and mentally and still get back to fairly normal living. I don't think that fussing over the veterans will be appreciated or even welcomed. Segregating them and coddling them will probably be resented.

I hope courses will be changed, but not cheapened. The veterans will and ought to be more thoughtful, more intent on the meaning of life. I doubt whether they will be any more practical or in a hurry to get a means of making a living than they were before the war. As al-

ways some will want this and some will want that; few will know what they do want and will take without much question whatever they are given.

With a fair sprinkling of veterans, or discharged soldiers, among seventeen-year-olds and girls, we are having far less trouble getting them to work than we had, and are still having, with the A.S.T.P. personnel. Some of the men who have been through Guadalcanal, etc., take some time to get set into routine, but we have no case in which the settling was impossible or long delayed.

I think we quite definitely should be thinking about the problems suggested, and we should arrive at some conclusions; but I fear the possibility of fixed plans and blueprints. We should not assume that we know exactly what is or will be good, nor should we assume that the boys will know exactly what is good. Be prepared by all means, but also be prepared to change.

This comment by Henry A. Doak, of the University of North Dakota, touches upon many questions about English for ex-service men and women. English departments everywhere are asking such questions, but most department heads agree with Merrill R. Patterson, of Marietta College, who says:

Before we can set down specific remedies we must first acquaint ourselves thoroughly with what we have to face. . . . We shall be able to determine more accurately what we must do after the first several months of teaching these returned veterans.

Sister Mariella, of the College of St. Benedict, says, similarly:

We will promptly take measures to cope with the problem *when it presents itself*. We feel that planning now may go wide of the needs that will actually appear.

Experience with such personnel is, of course, the only way to find their real needs and the best means of satisfying these needs. But some colleges are already having such experience and are willing to share it with the rest of us to our profit. This report will therefore deal

with the answers to a *College English* questionnaire which came from schools which have had more than ten service people return. The answers of those department heads who have had little or no experience with these ex-soldiers and ex-sailors are significant, too; but, since space here is limited, these will be turned over to the College Committee of N.C.T.E.'s new Curriculum Survey.

The clearest impression one gets from an examination of the survey returns is that college teachers think the returning service men will not wish to be "coddled" or made to seem in any way different from the stay-at-homes.

On the basis of experience with 99 day students and 194 evening students, William G. Crane, of the City College of the College of the City of New York, declares:

The experience which we have had at the City College with a large number of returned veterans is that they wish to take the regular courses which they would have taken before the war. They not only wish to be treated as other students but insist upon this. They resent any implication that they should be coddled. Although the numbers with which we have dealt in our Day Session and our Evening Session are large, we have not yet encountered any situation which required any special action beyond that we have formerly accorded students.

The College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics at the University of Minnesota thinks that,

in general, we hope to treat all service men just like other students. We do not wish to segregate them or make their record conspicuous to civilian students. We are proceeding on the assumption that the men want to forget a bad experience as rapidly as possible.

Fred W. Lorch, of Iowa State College, most of whose ex-service men have not been out of the United States, goes on record thus:

Ex-service men should *not* be differentiated from others, nor should we assume in our planning that they are different or want to be different. As a group they will be more mature and, I hope, more ready to say what they think. They will expect us in composition and literature to deal with the problems of the world we now live in; but that is what we long should have done anyway, whether we had them read contemporary or ancient literature.

This opinion that service men do not wish special favors or spotlight attention is closely related to the notion that if the instruction has been adapted to civilians it will also fit the veterans. Fifteen of the 35 schools which have enrolled ten or more returned service men and replied to our questionnaire say that these men show no notable differences in need or ability from usual civilian students; seven colleges say these men need training in the mechanics of language—as they probably say of most high-school graduates; three report that they do not know whether these men have special needs or abilities; and the rest make such remarks as: "They need a little more encouragement, perhaps"; "Other than a need to relieve physical restlessness they show no special needs . . . have, however, a maturer attitude toward their work"; "They have more than average maturity of judgment"; and this interesting comment from the University of Indiana, which has enrolled 168 ex-service men: "Our experience has been that returning veterans find it a little difficult to adjust to college life, but the average of their grades was 5 per cent higher than that of the regular students."

It should be noted that apparently most of the students upon whom these opinions are based have not been in the combat zones; possibly by the time the actual fighters return in large numbers, the restlessness, the maturity, and "the

power to speak vividly and convincingly of their experiences" will be more marked. In this day when provision for individual differences is a basic ideal of most educators, it seems inconceivable that several years' difference in age, an interruption of study, "travel" to strange climes and association with strange peoples, and, most of all, the experience of laying life down and finding it again—for many, not just once but a score of times—will not create a need for special treatment.

It must be reported also that some department heads—who *may* have themselves directly taught a few of these returned service men—report special characteristics. From the University of Minnesota comes the statement that these men need emotional adjustment and have special ability "to do propositional thinking, speaking, and writing." Henry A. Doak, quoted at the beginning of this paper, says that they require "patience with their fidgeting and nervous ways. There is one now and then who tries to tell the teacher how to handle the course (and sometimes the teacher needs a little of this)." S. D. Stephens, of the University of Newark, finds that "they need a little more encouragement, perhaps, and a little more patience on the part of the teacher, but as a group they are much like our regular students." Lisle A. Rose, of Michigan College of Mining and Technology, offers the most elaborate list of needs and abilities:

Needs: (1) Some work in grammar, especially on verbs and on the grammatical basis of punctuation; (2) spelling especially the "400 demons" and about 30 "engineering demons"; (3) ability to read expository and argumentative articles in political science and economics; and (4) public speaking. Abilities: (1) to organize most types of simple expository composition; (2) on the whole, to use direct and forthright phrasing; (3) to follow instruc-

tions better than the average peacetime student. [Would it be impertinent to wonder whether punctuation can be taught very successfully on a grammatical basis?]

The adaptation of instruction most commonly reported is the institution of "refresher" courses in composition—and, less often, in reading—and the provision of subfreshman work for boys who had not completed their high-school work and are now too old to go comfortably back and take up where they left off. Socially, this arrangement is almost necessary, but intellectually (and perhaps emotionally) it may often be bad if the instructors for this supposedly temporary division of the college are inexperienced and overworked graduate students. One large university is already planning to recruit the subfreshman staff among the graduate students and to abolish the present curtailment of their teaching load. Drill and more drill in mechanics by youngsters who do not know too much about language, have not learned teaching techniques, and are impatient to get back to the courses they must pass and the theses they are writing does not promise to give service men much satisfaction or profit. H. L. Creek reports from Purdue that their freshman work for service men is to be handled by a teacher experienced in both high-school and college teaching. Indiana University hopes to have these classes taught largely by ex-officers (graduate students or faculty members?), who, if they were good officers, should understand the former G.I. Joes.

In addition to the provision of refresher and/or subfreshman courses, a few colleges have already attempted some modification of their work to meet the special characteristics of ex-service personnel. To quote again Lisle A. Rose:

We have speeded up our presentation of the principles of organizing simple technical compositions; we have stressed even more than usual the purely conventional nature of many approved grammatical practices; we have utilized an even greater number than usual of examples from military history and practice. We have begun, earlier in Freshman English than usual, to stress masculine tactfulness in organization and phrasing.

J. H. Marshburn, of the University of Oklahoma, says that there the adaptation is "only individual conferences, so far." Clarice Short, of Fort Hays Kansas State College, says, "But the instructors try to give the ex-service students extra help out of class." Yet another questionnaire indicates that the instructors give much extra help and that the men are grateful for all such attention. From Fenn College, Randolph Randall reports: "Since we have always had a number of adults, some married, in classes with regular students in our urban college, we already had worked out our courses to take care of widely divergent interests." DeLancy Ferguson, reporting for Brooklyn College, tells of a special provision which he calls "a makeshift, with the usual weaknesses of makeshifts":

A special course, based on individual reading and personal conferences, has been set up as the equivalent of one semester of the prescribed courses in literature. It is open to, and has been taken by, returned veterans as well as undergraduates who expect to be drafted before the end of a semester.

Where the number of ex-service men is small, as it may remain in many small institutions, individual modification of assignments and individual help are obviously the only possible provision for their special needs. The instructor's work may be supplemented by that of departmental or institutional counselors, as Paul B. Anderson tells us it is at Otterbein College:

Normal advisory and counseling procedures—special veteran's committee to plan for such abnormal and service-caused difficulties as may develop in the larger group of veterans and returned war workers. This last group probably merits some consideration.

Perhaps the blanket provision made by huge Ohio State University, as reported by James F. Fullington, could profitably be adopted by small schools too:

In view of the problems of adjustment which may face returning ex-service students the University has established what it calls an Adjustment Period with the following provisions: That the first quarter of residence of every demobilized student be considered an adjustment period, and that at the close of the adjustment period, with the approval of the Dean of the College and the Coordinator, the student may elect to cancel any or all D and E grades which he earned during the period. That at the end of the demobilized student's first quarter of residence, the adjustment period automatically terminate, except for students who are notified by the Dean of the College (with the approval of the Coordinator), that the period has been extended for not more than one quarter. (These recommendations do not apply to the Graduate School and professional colleges in so far as they conflict with established professional regulations and criteria.)

Before leaving this topic of modification of courses, we should note that some colleges have been revising—modernizing, as they think—their required courses and feel that this fresh material should meet the needs of students in the post-war period. Listen to Thomas F. Dunn, of Drake University:

The same as freshman from our point of view. They need an understanding of language and language processes. Freshman English should be that rather than primarily skills. The skills come *after*, and coincidentally to, that understanding.

At the opposite pole from the sub-freshman and refresher courses is the

exemption from required courses through proficiency examinations. Many seem to feel that all necessary provision for individualization has been met when students have been placed in courses and sections according to the scores on tests and examinations. Certainly such adjustments are right—as far as they go.

Finally, may the surveyor hazard the guess that the most successful provisions for these special students—they are and will be special, however much we and they try to overlook the fact—will be through changes in motivation and teaching procedure rather than through changes in names or descriptions of courses. In most colleges there should be the "new emphasis on social and economic material" suggested by Kenneth Kuhn, of North Dakota State College; but should this not be for all students? In the end successful education of this crucial group of students will depend upon the warmth of the humanity, the alertness to the world of today, and the usable knowledge of literature and history in their teachers. Routine work in composition and study of great literature without relating it to present experiences and problems seem likely to be unprofitable and may even be rejected.

A suggestion outside the official limits of this survey and yet not impertinent to it is part of the rather completely worked-out plan set down by Russell Noyes, of Indiana University:

Noncredit cultural courses—especially designed for those with time on their hands, e.g., soldiers' wives. A possible technique here would be to have a staff of popular lecturers with an agreed upon program of study. (The Committee here recognizes the compulsion upon such departments as English, History, Fine Arts, and the School of Music to contribute to the well-being of a floating student population—and, in so doing, to contribute to the well-being of the community.)

The stage at which the men's education was interrupted seems to differ considerably with the institution. Table 1 must be read with the thought that these figures may represent a skewed sampling of the service forces. It shows the number of colleges reporting each percentage of veterans as having passed the required courses; for example, in two colleges 50 per cent of these students had passed required composition before going to war, and in three colleges 50 per cent had passed required literature.

The respondents to the *College English* questionnaire were asked to state problems which the questionnaire had missed. In reply S. D. Stephens, of the University of Newark, asks some of the questions which the surveyors hoped would be answered in the listing of special needs and abilities. Mr. Stephens says:

What literary content in general courses, such as required freshman work, is likely to be undesirable for veterans, either because of their maturity or because of their experiences? What adaptations in method are required or advisable because of the methods used in army instruction? How are these people likely to be conditioned to certain (desirable or undesirable) concepts of the nature of learning—concepts which cause them to evaluate hastily the kind of learning implied in liberal education?

There are dozens of questions which should be asked. The University of Newark and other colleges which have had in the past a large number of students well beyond the usual college age finds these questions not new, but the war experience of our incoming students may well make the questions more important than before. We think we know some of the problems likely to arise, but we are sure that we don't know the answers.

The matter of attitudes which he touches upon is mentioned by others and is probably the most important element in this whole problem. So far, most instructors have not discovered in the former service men attitudes differing

from those of other students, or have found them too difficult to describe. Perhaps we have all been giving too little heed to the individual attitudes of students, although these are at least as important as their I.Q.'s.

J. H. Marshburn, of the University of Oklahoma, is troubled by students' entering college in the middle of a term. He finds a partial—only a partial—an-

TABLE 1

Per Cent	Composition	Literature
0-10.....	11	10
15.....	2	1
20.....	2	1
25.....	2	1
30.....	1	..
35.....	1	1
40.....	2	..
45.....	..	1
50.....	2	3
55.....
60.....	1	2
65.....	3	..
70.....	1	..
75.....	3	1
80.....
85.....
90.....	2	..
Total.....	35	21*

* Several technical colleges have no required courses in literature.

swer in permission for any service students to enrol at any time in two new noncredit courses designed for students who had not completed their high-school work—a *tools* course in composition and a course in the interpretation of literature.

Kenneth Kuhn, of North Dakota State College, raises the "special problem represented by technical and vocational students whose interests are low in English as a tool or as a liberalizing course." Such students are likely to be more numerous than ever before.

And Lisle A. Rose, of Michigan Col-

lege of Mining and Technology, wants to know about "correlation of writing and reading with speaking and listening [surely a general problem] and utilization of extra-curricular activities as a means of teaching language skills [perhaps a solution rather than a problem]."

Most questionnaire papers are deadly dull, but those in this study are kept interesting by the vital comments written in. The quotations given here by no means exhaust the richness of the material. Would that some critics of the colleges might read the original returns!

Scholarship for Teachers of English

STEPHEN BLOORE¹

IN RECENT discussion of the effect of war on the colleges, it has often been suggested that the period of comparative inactivity forced on higher education in the liberal arts would afford an opportunity for a reorganization of methods and materials with the object of stimulating renewed vitality in the teaching of cultural subjects when peace finally comes. Professor Edman has commented:

During this period of convulsive dislocation teachers of the liberal arts will engage in heart-searching and, what is more important, re-searchings of the fundamentals and functions of these liberal arts.²

That such a reorganization is indeed necessary was apparent long before the war. The ineffectiveness of any cultural education was distressingly obvious. It was particularly painful in English, a "subject" universally "required" and supposedly basic even to various types of vocational training. Yet the small number of students who have left college with any ability to express themselves, with any interest in literature, or with any standard of judgment except mere entertainment value bears eloquent testi-

mony to the futility of most college teaching of literature.

Many a critic has placed the blame on the acquisitive nature of our society, and no doubt there is much to be said for this point of view. Not all the blame, however, can be pushed off on society, not, at least, until the profession has cleared its own skirts; for the simple truth is that in general the teaching of literature in college is completely out of step with the interests of college students and that most college teachers are ill-equipped to stimulate any response to literature.

A consideration of the training required of the college teacher of literature makes this fact abundantly evident. Since the Ph.D. is the key to academic advancement, graduate study leading to the Ph.D. is necessary. Yet the requirements for the Ph.D. necessitate an emphasis on facts about literature rather than on literature itself. In preparation for his oral examination the embryo scholar must accumulate a stock of facts in order to answer the minute questions of the examining committee. This places a premium on books about literature, and results in memory-stuffing instead of that careful examination of literature which leads to the formation of critical judgment and insight.

¹ Formerly a teacher at Dartmouth College and Pace Institute. Now in war industry.

² Irwin Edman, "War and the Liberal Arts," *Nation*, March 6, 1943, p. 339.

The same emphasis exists in the preparation of the Ph.D. dissertation. The subject chosen is usually some restricted area of a limited field, and the search is for the fact which can be attested by footnotes. The result is too often a mere compilation from which conclusions, when they are drawn at all, are timid or obvious—and unimportant. In no other field is Masfield's comment on uninspired fact so apt:

That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

This emphasis on fact and this kind of research has been justified by the assertion that the atmosphere created by the search for knowledge is the atmosphere in which college teaching should be done. This is apparently excellent doctrine. But what kind of knowledge? Significant knowledge or any collection of facts? Unfortunately, as the Ph.D. candidates have increased and the fields open for research have narrowed, the stress has been placed more and more on mere fact. The Ph.D. has become little more than a fact detective.

Any such approach neglects, of course, the very first and most important fact of all: that the books which we are allegedly studying are works of literature. They are books which have withstood the sifting process of time and of repeated critical appraisal, which have continued to afford satisfaction to the "passionate minority" who come back to them again and again. They have retained the power to stir the hearts and minds of men. A poem or a play is an emotional expression, not a peg for a dissertation. Any study which omits this consideration is simply no training at all for teachers of English. The attitude of the average college student toward the great literature of our language

is an indictment of our teaching traceable in large part to this system by which teachers of language and literature are supposedly produced. Nothing in the training of college teachers is designed to increase their ability to distil from books the wisdom or beauty which might make them attractive to the undergraduate mind.

This system of graduate study shows the influence of German universities and of scientific method. As Thwing points out, study at German universities inculcated in the Americans who first underwent its discipline "personal scholastic independence . . . thoroughness in thinking and research" and a desire to make a "contribution not wholly unworthy of himself to human knowledge."³ The germs of our modern American system are seen in these ideas of thoroughness and of making a contribution. Here we have the essence of the Ph.D. dissertation and the Ph.D. examination, perverted results of an originally worthy conception.

Although Thwing states that the "German university connoted and illustrated a broad interpretation,"⁴ we see the American university connoting quite the opposite. Thwing recognizes that the German idea suffered from the defects of its virtues. Speaking of the German belief in "intellectual thoroughness," which the German scholar demonstrated by pursuing every subject "through its many ramifications, into its remote sources and resources," he says:

This method is liable to result in the impact of deadening detail. It is prone to lack imagination in conception, quickening forcefulness in its processes, and scholarly and worthy splendor in its results.⁵

³ C. F. Thwing, *The American and the German University* (New York, 1928), p. 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

He might very well be describing exactly what has taken place in the United States, where this particular defect has been exalted as a virtue.

The influence of science, strong in the German universities as well as in other parts of the world, has also served to emphasize the undesirable tendency to stress mere fact to the exclusion of appreciation, critical judgment, and general ideas. Not that anyone objects to a proper application of scientific method. It is not, however, universally applicable. Where it has been insisted on to the exclusion of more desirable methods, as has been the case in literary study, the result is not scientific at all. A truly scientific method would build hypotheses upon facts and use these hypotheses for the discovery of new knowledge. Except in philology, literary scholarship has usually stopped with the collection of facts. The result has been little more than antiquarianism.

Speaking of the effect of science on the scholarship of the early 1900's, Canby comments:

And so began that race after the obscure, the difficult, and the neglected which, yielding rich spoils where science was the proper tool, led elsewhere to the vast accumulations of unimportant fact about literary history which clog the shelves of libraries and whiten the hair of the modern historian, who cannot write a page without consulting a shelf-full of pamphlets, many of which cancel each other. The parallel with the world outside, where technological advance was accompanied by a senseless race for self-defeating power and by riches badly used is too obvious to need pointing.⁶

This condition did not stop with the Gothic age, which is Canby's particular interest; it continues to the present day.

⁶ Henry Seidel Canby, *Alma Mater: The Gothic Age of the American College* (New York, 1936), p. 200.

The remedy is obvious but not easy. What is needed is a new conception of scholarship and a new system of training based on that conception. The ideal has been stated by former Dean F. J. E. Woodbridge of the Faculties of Political Science, Philosophy, and Pure Science at Columbia:

It would measure up to the heart's desire if our graduate students who go forth to be leaders in educating the youth of the land and in extending the boundaries of human knowledge were specialists to whom poetry was not strange nor science unintelligible.⁷

To attain anything like that ideal for the great majority of graduate students, it will be necessary to recognize that most of them are to be teachers, not research specialists. This does not mean that research should be eliminated from their training. It does require a realization of the fact that scholarship is more than research. In Professor C. J. Friedrich's words:

A great deal of the most important scholarship is not the result of research, but rather of wide reading and experience. This is particularly true in the humanities and social sciences. While the ability to carry on research in a particular field is an important part of the equipment of any teacher and scholar, it is by no means central. Broadly speaking, I should maintain that it is more important to be able to think than to be able to do research.⁸

Friedrich's distinction between thinking and research is especially important. Emerson's famous definition of the scholar was, as everyone knows, "Man thinking." If modern scholarly training turned out thinking men, we need have no fear of using them as teachers. The typical Ph.D. is, of course, not man

⁷ Columbia University, *Annual Reports* (1927), p. 158.

⁸ "The Selection of Professors," *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1938, p. 110.

thinking but man investigating—and never realizing that investigation is only one of the first steps in the thinking process.

It is safe to say, then, that we need, first, to place emphasis on a wider conception of scholarship in which research will be the handmaiden of scholarship and of teaching. Research must, in short, be recognized as an important tool for the scholar and teacher, a tool to be used for the intellectual advancement of the user. As a further result of this conception, judgment of scholarly results would be placed on quality rather than on mere quantity. The number of a teacher's "contributions" would no longer be a badge of merit unless they were expressions of thought as well as of industry.

Just as a shift from the present emphasis on research is necessary, so also is another change which would stress acquaintance with works of literature themselves rather than the facts about them. Facts necessary for an understanding of literature must, of course, be studied; but they should be kept in perspective. If we focus firmly on literature itself, the facts about works and authors will serve to illumine literature rather than to overwhelm it, as so often happens today.

A significant corollary of these two changes of emphasis will be found in their effect on the personality of the scholar himself. The modern Ph.D. escapes pedestrianism only by the grace of God or a sheer effort of will. His training is a hindrance to the development of an interesting personality, a prerequisite for a college teacher of English. Twenty-year-olds will never be stirred by the dull recitals of most graduate-school classes, where few concessions to human nature are ever made. That there is little joy in the pursuit of the Ph.D. is amply at-

tested by the number who fail to finish. Statistics from one of our largest universities indicate that 65 per cent of those who begin graduate study fail to continue to a degree. Part of this mortality is, of course, the elimination of the unfit; but part of it unquestionably represents the disgust of those who refuse to stultify themselves by continuing the memory-stuffing process. Lively, interesting personality can never result from a deadening process, and the college teaching of English requires lively, interesting personality. Study which concentrates on literature itself would have some chance of producing such teachers.

The third characteristic of a revised scholarly training would be an emphasis on a broad outlook as opposed to the present stress on minutiae. By this, one means an emphasis on the general principles and ideas which should result from a study of literature. The Ph.D. examination, which would then become a discussion of these general principles and of the facts supporting them, would reveal qualities of mind. It would cease to be a minute inspection of a crammed memory. The training eventuating in such an examination would approach a truly scientific method in that it would be a process of using facts to support hypotheses and theories. Norman Foerster found such a training characteristic of the French universities:

... a scholarship at once scientific and critical, close to the facts but dominating them through general ideas, taste, and critical insight, contributing to knowledge in the best sense, and developing rather than warping the scholar himself.⁹

Given training with the characteristics outlined above, the college teacher of English will have a knowledge of liter-

⁹ *The American Scholar* (Chapel Hill, 1929), p. 61.

ature itself. He will have some chance of being a scholar in the broadest sense, enthusiastic about literature and enkindling enthusiasm in others. The adoption of such principles would greatly enhance the prospect of obtaining col-

lege teachers of English who would satisfy the heart's desire for "specialists to whom poetry . . . [is] not strange nor science unintelligible." Teachers like these might well revitalize the whole teaching of college English.

How Does One Pronounce?

LODWICK HARTLEY¹

A FEW evenings ago I attended a radio broadcast by one of our great symphony orchestras. Before the conductor "mounted the podium," as conductors invariably do these days, the velvet-voiced announcer purred his program notes. The main fare was to be the Beethoven *Seventh*, we were told, and the announcer described it with another cliché, "the apotheosis of the dance." If for me the phrase was too familiar, the pronunciation of the leading word in it was not. When I heard the announcer say, very carefully, *a·poth'e·o'sis*, I blinked, sat up a little straighter, and took fiendish pleasure in catching the impeccable gentleman in an indiscretion. Had I not spent half my youth learning to say *ap'o·thé'o·sis*? When I returned home, a consultation of my dictionary quickly disillusioned me. It is true that the dictionary on which I had cut my eye teeth gave my pronunciation the first choice, but it admitted the announcer's. On the other hand, the latest edition of the same dictionary—now considered the authority—reversed the procedure and made my pronunciation, the child of careful and tender nurture, worse than nothing; that is, a mere next best. The discovery was most dis-

heartening. Of course, I had only to look at the list of variants in the front to see that there had been considerable disagreement for some time. This information served to stiffen my resolution.

The great *New English Dictionary*, whose *a*'s were edited back in the *fin de siècle*, gave my pronunciation first but admitted, even in such a remote era, that the contending pronunciation was the "more usual." More usual for whom? Perhaps for the Philistines, but certainly not for those who learned their Greek at Rugby or Balliol College, Oxford, or for those who moved in the more select circles in Belgravia and Mayfair. Certainly, nobody with a feeling for etymology or with an old-school tie could adopt *a·poth'e·o'sis*, which splits the two Greek roots meaning "to make a god of" and merges them into a meaningless syllable.

Out of the whole process of self-justification I emerged a firm reactionary. *Apotheosis*, my final argument ran, is a literary—or, if you please, a learned—word. It is not going to be dropped casually to the checker across the counter at the A. & P., nor will it be carried to a baseball game, nor will it ornament your discourse when a beautiful blonde sits opposite you at dinner. It will not stain or sanctify the lips of your favorite service-station attendant, or the newsboy, or the cashier of the local bank with whom you play golf. In general, it will

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move in very select company and will be used (if wisdom prevails) sparingly and with precision and taste. Occupying such a position as it does, it should therefore be impervious to change. Especially is this true when the pronunciation accenting the first and third syllables both satisfies the natural tendency of the language toward a recessive accent and also places the emphasis where it belongs etymologically. Granted that many times the word may run the risk of mutilation at the hands of the bosomy lady who reads a paper on Etruscan pottery to the Thursday Afternoon Book Club or perhaps by the modern college student with small Latin and less Greek, it should nevertheless rise each time from its own ashes more splendidly correct than ever.

If in regard to *apotheosis* my inclination is Tory, I am not exactly consistent in my attitude toward another word in the *a*'s: *abdomen*. No dictionaries and no amount of lists showing "Words Commonly Mispronounced" ever convinced me that the accent should be on the second syllable. When Mr. Ira Gershwin wrote the clever lyric in *Porgy and Bess* in which Jonah makes his "home in" the whale's "ab·do'men," he may be saying what he himself was taught to say; but he is saying what it is highly doubtful that any Charleston Negro ever said.

Now, unlike *apotheosis*, *abdomen* does not belong to a limited company moving in a rarefied atmosphere. Its more vulgar synonym replaces it—it is true—in the street, in the gutter, and, on occasion, in even better localities; but in the main it is used and understood by almost everybody. For this reason, the way it is pronounced by the butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker is of first importance to the orthoëpist. One hardly has to point out that if more people have pains in their *ab'do·mens* than in their

ab·do'mens, then *ab'do·men* should win by sheer preponderance. It is gratifying that after many years the dictionary-makers are catching up in this particular point; and some of the best authorities give *ab'do·men* first billing.

Still another story is that of *scenario*. Here, albeit uncritically, I for a long time allowed the dictionaries and word lists to convince me. The only trouble was that when I sprang *sha·nä'ri·o* on my unsuspecting friends, they laughed as the advertisements used to say they did at the young man who sat down at the piano. But, unlike the precocious young man, I had no laugh in return. The firm assurance that I was using the only pronunciation listed in one of the best dictionaries was no salve to my pride. (It is not always better to be right than President.) And I could never convince anybody that I was anything but a snob when I used it. My solution was to avoid it scrupulously and to speak, if need be, of a *script*; for at that point I could not bear the idea of flouting openly and consciously the authority of a dictionary. For years *scenario* did not cross my lips. But the feeling of rightness did not linger. However correct the strict Italian pronunciation might be, I secretly concluded, moving pictures are made in California, not in Italy. The word itself is flashed thousands of times daily on screens in cities and hamlets, and it is to be found scores of times in the cheap magazines that literate men read only in dentists' offices and literate women (they insist) see only in beauty parlors. In fact, every girl behind the counter at Woolworth's knows what a *scenario* is and not one of them calls it *sha·nä'ri·o*. Again, the dictionary-makers have done a good job of catching up. In the dictionary before me, the old pronunciation is given a poor third place—as a matter of fact, with only the *sha·*

showing—and I can now use the word with perfect serenity.

I am also thankful that something has been done about *exemplary*. Attempting to pronounce it as older dictionaries said I must—that is, accenting the first syllable—was somewhat like diving headforemost from a high perch. After I had hit the first syllable, the rest of the word might come trailing wispily along; then again it might get completely lost in the larynx. Now, happily, the accent on the second syllable is perfectly proper. No such good job, however, has yet been done with *hospitable*. Unless one wishes to be classed as "*esp. Brit.*," one must still accent the first syllable and hope for the best. An accent on the second syllable, though unattractive to the squeamish, is infinitely more sensible because it renders the word actually pronounceable.

Since they were all printed before our current occupation of England, most American dictionaries now show a salutary tendency to relegate British pro-

nunciations to second place. Thus we are allowed to give *dictionary*, *military*, and *secretary* accents on the first and third syllables with the solid assurance of having not only the American flag standing behind us but American orthoëpists as well.

But when dictionaries seem most to please me, I suddenly find cause for another quarrel, such as my final one with what has happened to *pariah*. Since the word has always been a high-brow designation for one of low caste, it is worse than illogical (again, as in the instance of *apotheosis*) to allow the long-established *pā'ri·a* or *pā'ri·a* to be supplanted by a pronunciation that admits of such vulgarity as

Clap the old pariah
In a blooming Black Maria
And take him in a jiffy to the gaol.

But a very reputable dictionary now makes the rhyme perfectly proper.

It is difficult to maintain one's old faith in the hard common sense of the experts.

The Teacher of Composition Looks At Speech

ALEXANDER M. BUCHAN¹

THE theme handed in is good. Its sentences are correct, and its organization better than usual. But the teacher of composition does not like it. He refers to the student writer contemptuously as "one of those speech people" and accords the theme a "B" with reluctance. He resents a tone of dogmatism audible in the run of the short sentences, and he suspects that the logic is not nearly so pellucid as it seems. Though the topic

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was supposed to be expository, it sounds argumentative as this student phrases it. There is noticeable a chip-on-the-shoulder technique of beginning statements with "It is perfectly obvious . . ."; "It is apparent to the dullest intelligence . . ."; "Nobody but a fool would . . ."; and of settling argument more in this fashion than by syllogism or factual evidence. Even when the teacher of composition concedes that the theme has virtue—not his own kind of virtue but one that he scornfully credits

to the speech course—he is irritated and shows it.

The fact is that, at a time when classes in speech are threatening to engulf classes in written composition, the old-fashioned theme-a-week teacher acts on the defensive. To his sorrow he knows that he cannot himself boast of doing a perfect job, since, after years of reading and writing in school and college, his pupils are still foggy about the distinction between a participle and a gerund, more familiar with the slang of sport than with Newman's English, and both tongue-tied and pen-tied in stating a simple abstract idea. Garrulous on the campus and in the drug store, they have few words left for the classroom. To teach them logic still requires the drill-sergeant's one-two-three, in the form of an outline; and their paragraphs, for the most part, are divisible by blank half-lines more than by orderly sequence.

It is, therefore, with some initial pleasure that a teacher of composition runs across a theme written by a student who has been rigorously schooled in forensics. Valedictorian or also-ran of his high-school class, this student has learned a good deal about paragraphs, the use of short, effective sentences, and, frequently, the advisability of tackling a subject worth writing about. In the welter of thin, ill-organized themes on "Why I Dislike Reading," "My Holiday Experiences," or "Why I Go to Church," this one on "Europe after the War" seems well worth a "B." And, usually, this impression of competence prevails for several weeks. The high-school graduate in speech—graduate in virtue of practice rather than of theory—if allowed to follow his bent, will rove from the League to the New Deal, from the New Deal to the future of aviation, and from aviation to the solution of the

world's ills. Before the first semester is over, he will have settled with precision most of the political and economic problems of the day. His opinions, on the whole, will be firmly given, a transcript often of opinions offered by "authorities"; and they will be arranged according to the book, each "main head" being followed by subheads and illustrations in apple-pie order.

In theme-writing, as in tennis, it is true that a stiff opponent gives better practice than a dub, but the composition teacher begins to guess that some intellectual problems are a trifle too stiff for high-school pupils or even for college freshmen. It is not the arduousness of the problem that matters, of course, but the risk that a tyro in experience and in thought may reach too facile a conclusion. A clear opinion about the place of the United States in the postwar world is less a sign of wisdom than of ignorance and prejudice, both unfortunate in youngsters as in the rest of us. Where, as on broad issues of politics and economics, information and opinion are mainly on the level of the magazines and newspapers, some other secure knowledge and a mite of experience are advisable before opinion becomes set and dogmatic.

But is the opinion dogmatic? Here is a not unfair sample, adapted from quite a good forensic theme:

Roosevelt is attempting and will apparantly (*sic*) succeed (*sic*, grammar) in seizing a fourth term while the whole country looks on in patent helpless amazement. I don't believe that the democracy of which America has been so justly proud is being used in this crisis. I don't believe that one man should be allowed to hold the reins of power in a democracy for more than two terms at most. In this statement I stand at one with Governor Dewey and the Republican Party. . . .

It is, I'm afraid, a good example of the effects of forensic discipline. The

sentences are short and pungent. In one, at least, antithesis is noticeable. The opinion of an expert is given and is worked into the body of the writing. The repetition, "I don't believe," "I don't believe," while not grammatical, is in good debating odor. Yet the tone of the whole paragraph is so insufferably cocky that only election manners could outdo it. Each succeeding remark, while definitely said, is more questionable than the one ahead of it, and the writer's eighteen-year-old association of himself with Dewey would be pathetic, if it weren't monstrous at the age. Encouraged in this sort of cocksure opinion, so cocksurely said, a youngster runs a fair chance of never wanting to see beyond the opinions of his local newspaper and of never scratching a single worthwhile idea out of his inflated head.

Perhaps it is not the responsibility of the teacher of composition to quarrel with his students' opinions. Let us quarrel with the style then. Adherence to a set of grammatical rules is no more a guaranty of good writing than is obedience to rules of speech about organization and emphasis. In the sample almost every quality of a vicious style can be pointed out. The "I don't believe's" and "I don't think's," with which debating youngsters pepper their remarks, are, of course, quite unnecessary. A purely general statement about our pride in democracy obtrudes on the discussion of a specific problem—always an evil trick of style. The main objection, however, arises from the debater's emphasis, which is so obvious in every sentence. Even though the compositional rule about variety in sentence structure is only a rule, at least the practice of variety steers the amateur in composition clear of abrupt transitions and teaches him

some of the qualification that is found in most truth.

Yet another weakness of the debater's training is noticeable in the most helpful part of it—its guidance in organization. With the wayward minds of young people to direct into channels of logic, most teachers of English are happy if they can drive an inkling of an outline into young heads and are still happier if, after the outline is made, the writer or speaker sticks to it. And the value of this glimmering of logical or speech order is so great that to question it seems treachery to the profession. Some of us, however, who have taught "outlines" and "organization" for years are still puzzled to answer the intelligent student's question about many good essays he reads in a textbook: "Why is it that Bertrand Russell or Bearé or Walter Lippmann have so little organization in their writing?" The student has noticed the absence of "first," "second," "third," or "my first point," "my second point," "my third point," and, trained to this formal division, is understandably lost without it. He feels, perhaps with justice, that an "outline" of such a disorderly essay is impossible. After the nicely indented précis set out on the blackboard, all the examples in the text, and the insistence of the teacher that the "outline must be handed in with the theme," he suspects a catch—and he is right. Though his instructor, loyal to the profession, will always be able to extract something that looks like an outline, he must never forget that in writing there is an organization finer than division into fragments—a gradual emergence of an idea which twists around upon itself with all the vitality of a living thing. It may be that the firstly-secondly-thirdly of the Protestant homily has had too great an influ-

ence on rhetorical practice and that the speaker, too, is mistaken who thinks to save the world's soul by chopping its problems into minute, exegetical bits.

It can be claimed that these weaknesses of cocksure opinion, a rhetorical style, and too formal an organization are no more the speech teacher's concern than they are the problems of the teacher of composition. Teachers of both speech and writing, however, are fairly sure where the fault lies. An opinion set down on paper is still tentative. Many of the students' ideas which are set down in notebooks and themes are so uncertainly held as to be forgotten the day after the lecture is heard or the exercise written. But an opinion voiced in public is held rather grimly, for somehow the speaker attaches his own pride of person to the view he expresses, and he dare not recant for fear of losing face. If the dictators of Europe had not orated so largely, perhaps their policies might have been subject to change. The student speaker, especially if he must hold his end up in a debate, becomes quite magisterial in his opinions. Most of us who judge contests realize this in our candid moments. With all deference to the value of public speaking, we know how easy it is to brazen through an idea on the evidence of an incident, a statistic, or an authority—and then to believe the idea once it has been given utterance. In talk a parable is more powerful than a syllogism, and truth, with its many faces, is frequently distorted for the immediate effect of a remark on an audience. The assurance of a speech-maker may be no more firmly grounded than on his ability to make a point good, and from such an ability, grown a habit, dogmatism grows.

It is unfortunate for the student if he

transfers this platform confidence to the study where he pens his themes, for, when he stakes his own importance on remarks he makes, he is likely to refuse to budge in his opinion and often objects violently to any more thinking on the topic. Once he is convinced, from having said so, that the tactics of the C.I.O. are necessary and beneficial, he continues to argue in this vein—at least, until he enters business for himself. Perhaps, with his tenacious, if ill-founded, certainties, he is, on the whole, a better student than his fellow who does not care, one way or another, about the C.I.O., but he would be wiser without his dogmatisms—and a more amenable writer of English.

Generally, if he is a good debater, his style is easy to follow, as the style of a good speaker ought to be. There is no mistaking his opinion, since he reinforces it with all the necessary tricks—antithesis, repetition, interrogation, exclamation, climax. Yet this theoretical emphasis, so necessary in speech, is insulting to a reader, even the overworked reader of themes. The pattern of speech is woven in brighter, more violent tints than the pattern of writing, and frequently, for the sake of an effective contrast or summary, the speaker willingly surrenders proportion. It is hard, in any case, to persuade students of the value of moderation and precision: when these have been counseled out of them in the interests of forensic victory, the teacher might as well save his breath. From every side the slogans of advertising and propaganda form deep-enough grooves in our minds; and when the effectiveness of rhetorical catchwords—glorified by the advice of best-selling manuals on speech—is pointed at with pride by the teacher of speech, the virtue of a plain,

honest English style seems drab by comparison.

And the reason is clear. A plain English style, such as the theme-a-week teacher strives for, is the expression of plain ideas and is not meant, in the first place, for the inculcation or refutation of a doctrine. In the older discipline of writing, the student of English was asked to state, as simply as possible, his views on Chaucer's pilgrims. With a sonnet of Shakespeare's under his nose, he toiled away at converting the unfamiliar, imaginative words into familiar, rather drab phrases of his own. Now and then he was even asked to write about "Courage" or the "Battle of Gettysburg" in the hope—not always disappointed—that the effort to find a fresh angle on an old problem would drag out of him a few sentences of honest idea. Whenever he began to argue, he was advised to quit, for the aim of his teacher was to get him, first of all, to understand.

It seems as if the process is reversed, and courses in both speech and composition show the consequences. Before a lad leaves high school, he is expected to stand up before his class or an assembly of the whole school and be dogmatic and eloquent about democracy, or freedom of thought, or the value of initiative. In the speech room, he hears that the first purpose of a speaker is to "convince his audience," and, though he lacks a real conviction to bless himself with, he proceeds on the letter of this advice. In one of the familiar manuals on speaking, out of a list of fifty suggested topics—"to impress," "to entertain," "to convince"—not a single one is offered with the heading "to be understood"; and only two or three could possibly be considered unargumentative. Yet the end of both speech and writing is understanding. It is not a preacher, a proselytizer,

or a priest we look for in our high-school or college youngster, but a neophyte, just baptized into learning and humble at its doors.

Perhaps, as has been hinted, platform eloquence has been too closely related, in our civilization, with the pulpit and the political assembly. In collections of selected orations, too many preachers and statesmen are represented, and too few common workers of the world. The preacher, vain of his eloquence, allows it to be published, and there are markets to absorb every bit of political verbiage, foolish and wise; but Edison's instructions to his assistants (they were probably curt and clear), or a doctor's explanation and advice to his patient (also curt and possibly a trifle profane), or the first driving lesson an intelligent father gives his son—these are not recorded, though they ought to be. The speech that should be offered to students, for example and imitation, is not the oratorical flight of a Chautauqua lecturer but the simple explanation men have given of themselves and their work. We have substituted for that kind of speech the plea of the evangelist and the harangue of demagogues.

The speech course is not the only one that suffers. The teacher of English composition knows how hard it is, even in these days of superfluous textbooks, to find one that is not glutted with economics, politics, and the whole apparatus of an editorial room. Long before the students have learned to grasp simple meanings, they have Walter Lippmann, Harold Laski, J. M. Keynes, Jeans, Haldane, Joad, Inge, and Eddington slipped into their mouths, and they teehee on the granite rock of philosophy. No wonder they learn an early, and final, assurance. As Stuart Chase pointed out of their elders, they bandy around words

like "democracy," "fascism," "propaganda," "principle," "relativity," "entanglements," in sublime ignorance of the tyrannic power of their baubles.

If speech, then, is to be substituted for writing in the teaching of English, or even to be made a part of the regular curriculum, its aims and its substance must be altered to suit the new vocation. It can become in the schools, as it has always been at its best in the world, a means of understanding and communication rather than a tool of persuasion. From the covers of the textbook, Mussolini with uplifted arm, Lloyd George with finger crooked, Norman Thomas in an oratorical gesture, will disappear, and other, undemonstrative speakers fill their place. Its aim will not be the production of team debaters. It will not encourage emphasis where there is no real opinion to be emphatic about, nor will it insist on "outlines" merely because these are a convenient source of discussion for the teacher. It will not take fine ideas and do with them as the head-hunters do to a human head—cut out the bony structure and hand over a dry, wizened husk for the students to carry away and use.

Above all, it will go searching for other material than the speculations of the world economist and the political columnist. If the student cribs from Walter Lippmann, he will be asked to confess his debt and make the effort to put in his own words what Lippmann said in his. The student of sociology, bringing to

class his notes on the family or the population of cities, will attempt to explain them to the other students and, in so doing, learn them himself. A girl, dabbling in batik, or a lad, investigating polarized light, will have the chance in the speech room to expound a hobby and perhaps make it an intelligent pursuit as well as a pastime. From magazine articles here and there, along with his own written notes, each student will assemble an individual textbook, far better for him than the politico-economic compilations of the publishers. The textbook-makers can console themselves by devising texts suitable for engineers, nurses, architects, doctors, all in the making, with their special interests and needs in mind.

It might even happen that great literature will not be forgotten. There should be no less an opportunity for plain speech in explaining the background of *A Blithedale Romance* than in discussing the future of Germany or Japan, and a student can be held within closer bounds when he talks about *Deer-slayer* than in attempting an analysis of Mussolini or John D. Lewis. Dreadfully out of date as the notion is, if we judge from the titles of speeches and themes, good writing of today has a trick of emerging from the dire perplexity of trying to understand good writing of long ago; and good speech, like the thief in the night, comes to those whom an old idea thrills, and who want to make it very clear to a friend or neighbor.

Current English Forum

Conducted by

PORTER G. PERRIN, ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT, JAMES B. McMILLAN,
AND JULIUS C. BERNSTEIN

Three questions concerning the "proper classification" of words are asked by S. C., of Louisiana:

1. Should such words as *wind*, *storm*, *weather*, *heat*, and *chilliness* be called abstract nouns?

2. Do reflexive or intensive pronouns have case?

3. When possessive pronouns are used in sentences to modify nouns, are they classified as adjectives or possessive pronouns?

Since all three questions are related, suppose we examine the matter of classification before taking up the particular questions. From time to time this department has discussed the principles of classifying words, but another comment seems desirable.

First, it must be said that there is no accepted official source of information on classification. There is no carefully guarded tablet of stone, nor any erudite tome, nor any grammatical patriarch to provide us with rules or applications of rules. There is not even a political commissar of grammar to make rulings. There is just one source of information: the English language itself. To save time, we do not usually go directly to the language to settle every new question but to the classification already made by trained observers: descriptive grammarians.

Second, it must be remembered that there is nothing like perfect agreement among the descriptive grammarians on how to classify words. Some grammarians find nine parts of speech, some eight—some seven, some four. When two grammarians agree on the number of parts of speech, they do not necessarily agree on which class every word falls into. But, one might ask, why not ignore all but the best grammarian, and take his dicta as the law? This course is

somewhat appealing, but we are then forced to decide how to choose the "best" grammarian. The people best qualified to judge are the grammarians themselves, and they would be the last to agree on a candidate. If we should ask rival grammarians to defend their systems, each one could demonstrate features of his own that are superior to others! The inevitable conclusion, uncomfortable as it may be to those souls who like orderly simplicity, is that *there simply is no one right way to classify words.*

Let me hastily add, however, that this conclusion does not prevent our assigning words to "parts of speech," nor does it keep us from labeling nouns and pronouns with "cases" and "genders." It does prevent our trying to make one particular system the only one. There are still several satisfactory solutions for those of us who need a classifying system for use in the English classroom. A teacher can adopt any workable system, preferably the one set forth in the textbook he is using. It has been my experience that almost any standard textbook provides a satisfactory set of rules on "parts of speech," "cases of nouns," etc., *that will serve the actual, serious needs of the classroom.* But not necessarily answer all questions. A great many arguments about the case or the part of speech of this word or that are pointless and trivial. In such disputes the students' use of the language is not affected one whit.

In a class in advanced grammar, where classifying is itself a subject of study, there will be long and profitable discussions of the classification of particular words. But in a composition class it is fatuous to try to assign every word that is proposed to some "part of speech" or other category. This makes the subject of study a mere game,

and crossword puzzles would be a more profitable game.

The actual and serious needs of the classroom can be served by almost any standard system *provided* the teacher makes it clear to the class that we do not have a neat set of clear-cut pigeonholes into which every word can be placed. Every system based on the traditional parts of speech and rhetorical classes leaves some words loosely labeled. Time after time in this Forum we have discussed words that could be just as well called one part of speech as another. The individual teacher must decide whether to admit this uncertainty of classification to the students or to insist by authority on one "right" system. When traditional systems are used, an important decision must be made: whether to be dictatorial in order to gain uniformity.

Fortunately, there is another solution. We don't have to follow the traditional methods of classifying. A functional method of classification is described by Janet Rankin Aiken in *Commonsense Grammar* (Crowell, 1936), which permits a reasonable democracy in the classroom and achieves a reasonable uniformity in classifying words. This system throws out the old "parts of speech" and sets up clear-cut and useful ways of grouping and labeling words. Until some such system is refined through widespread use, no one can classify words in one and only one way.

Now for the questions raised by S. C.: The words *heat*, *cold*, *weather*, and *chilliness* do not normally have plurals; this is a characteristic of abstract nouns. *Wind* and *storm* do have plurals, as do most "concrete" nouns. The reason for this is that the first four denote general properties apart from any particular things or events. The latter two denote specific things or events. Most teachers would probably call *wind* and *storm* concrete, the other four abstract.

Reflexive pronouns have or do not have "case" in accordance with one's definition of case. If by case we mean case-form, they do not have. If we mean function, they do have: they have several different uses in

sentences. One teacher or textbook can define case as function and consistently say that reflexive pronouns have case. Another can define case as case-form and consistently say that they do not have case. The only obligation is that the teacher or textbook use the same definition of case consistently and not shift it without notice.

Possessive pronouns can be called adjectives or possessive pronouns or both. Either classification may tell us something useful about them. Why not call them possessive pronouns used as adjectives? This indicates a form classification and a use classification. The same automobile can be called a family car, a four-door sedan, a motor vehicle, a straight-eight, or a jalopy, depending on which label is most useful to the speaker and hearer. Only an omnipotent dictator with an omnipresent Gestapo could require us to use one name and one only for an automobile.

Such questions as these, it seems to me, need not be referred to any "authority" outside the classroom. The teacher and the class can hold a discussion of how and why words are classified and come to a reasonable, democratic agreement on the system of classification to be used, then apply the system to the words that require study. In every class studying the *use* of the language it seems to me necessary to ask first *why* it is desirable to classify a particular word before getting into a dispute over whether it is "called" this or that.

J. B. McM.

Q. Is the word following an introductory interjection capitalized? The following sentence offers an example: "Oh! That (that) hurt me."

G. T.

A. By placing an exclamation mark after *Oh* the writer makes it a complete utterance; the exclamation mark is normally an end-stop signal. *That* would be capitalized, since it begins a new sentence. If a comma were placed after *Oh*, indicating a mild interjection, *that* would not be capitalized.

J. B. McM.

Summary and Report

About Literature

THE TERCENTENARY OF MILTON'S *Areopagitica* has naturally inspired observation and celebration both in this country and in Britain. That it should have come at a time when both Britons and Americans are looking askance at certain restrictions of war censorship has given special fillip to what otherwise might have been an academic procession of remarks fitting the occasion.

In the *Fortnightly Review* for October, Phyllis Bentley describes the conference held in Kensington by the London branch of the P.E.N., international society of writers, and other learned societies. Ten sessions were held, with the robot bombs flying overhead, while such celebrities as E. M. Forster, Harold Laski, Herbert Agar, and many others discussed "the place of spiritual and economic values in the future of mankind." Some of the points of agreement were that there "ought to be a maximum of interference with liberty to exploit, but a minimum of interference with freedom to express; that censorship was and is deplorable and should be resisted in behalf of detestable as well as agreeable opinions."

The tercentenary was observed by the American Library Association by the designation of November 19-25 as "Freedom of the Press Week" and appropriate articles in the November A.L.A. *Bulletin*. The "Public Be Banned!" by Karline Brown is both an amusing and a disturbing description of "the roster of masterpieces whose authors have been in the vanguard of human progress" and whose works, now classics, have been put to fire or to the ax or subjected to severe censorship. These include the *Odyssey*, the works of Confucius, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and *De monarchia*, Voltaire's *Candide*, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and

Notre Dame de Paris, and the works of Lessing, Spinoza, and Albert Einstein. She concludes: "History bears articulate testimony against censorship and the sagacity of the censors."

A SECOND ARTICLE, "CENSORSHIP in Wartime," by Kimball Young, analyzes some of the psychological reasons for censorship (a major one, popular fear of the disruption of the status quo) and gives examples of current censorship which seem to go beyond that demanded by the need of social security. "Surely the essential thing for the librarian," he writes, "is to realize that he is not a mere passive element in the battle of books but an active protagonist in preserving one of the chief values in our democracy." The "Library's Bill of Rights" is also reprinted in this *Bulletin*, with an additional statement adopted last October by the Council of the American Library Association. "Books believed to be factually correct should not be banned or removed from the library simply because they are disapproved by some persons."

"PROTOFACISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE," by Freeman Champney, in the autumn *Antioch Review* discusses from another angle the fact that "the showdown in fascism in America is moving up on us." Champney here considers works of fiction which tackle directly various of the forms which fascism might take here. As he says, "these forms, taken in their entirety, constitute nothing less than the whole problem of the nature and direction of American life in the matrix of world revolution." Works discussed include Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*; *The Underground Stream* by Albert Maltz; James T. Farrell's *Ellen Rogers*;

Number One by Dos Passos; Lewis Browne's *See What I Mean?* and Warren Beck's *Final Score*. Each of these novels deals with one or more "deeply rooted habits of mind in America which are obstructive to functional democracy and might be used to support a domestic fascism." They are not in themselves fascism; but, as Champney points out, "they are the potential bases for a mass supported American fascism," and, since "the issues are . . . as broad and mixed as life itself, American writers can play a part of considerable importance in shaping the decisions."

"CASS MASTERN'S WEDDING RING," a story by Robert Penn Warren, in the fall *Partisan Review*, is part of a novel in progress. Not only is it absorbing as a yarn with a Civil War and a proslavery and anti-slavery background, but to anyone who has ever tried to get "the person" to emerge from biographical materials or to write a doctoral dissertation, the portrait of Jack Burden and his problems will be especially interesting. The same issue carries an excellent revaluation of Franz Kafka as a novelist, by Hannah Arendt, and a psycho-analytic study by Saul Rosenzweig, reprinted from *Character and Personality*, on "The Ghost of Henry James."

"A WORD FOR THE AMERICAN ESSAY," by John T. Flanagan, in the fall *American Scholar*, opens with the statement: "If one needs an excuse to write about the American essay, this is it: remarkably few people have done so." Flanagan here fills the need with a brief survey on essay-writing in America from Cotton Mather to the present. Today, however, he finds that "the familiar essay, despite its brilliant heritage, has been shoved aside like a plea for pacifism," but he has faith that the "essay can no more die than the ballad and the tale . . . so long as the essay reveals personality and so long as there is personality to reveal."

In the same issue of the *Scholar*, Robert Gordis, president of the Rabbinical As-

sembly of America, contributes an important article, "The Jews—a Problem That Cannot Wait." In effect, his thesis is: "Zionism deserves the allegiance of every lover of freedom." He gives good reasons for it.

"STORY TOLD IN INDIANA," A NEW one-act play by Betty Smith, author of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, is published for the first time in the November *Theatre Arts Monthly*. In its simplicity and its power to move, in the vitality of its economy and almost folk quality, one is reminded of some of the one-act plays of the early Irish theater. The plot is woven around Abraham Lincoln and Johnny Appleseed on the eve of Lincoln's twenty-first birthday, when the family is about to move to Illinois.

"FILMS FOR PEACE" AND "CHINA Looks Ahead" are both important for persons interested in the development of the drama. Both also appear in the November *Theatre Arts*. In "Films for Peace" Arthur L. Mayer remarks: "The movie, the play-boy of the past fifty years, has come of age and through it a universal language we can speak to the world—if we only will." He discusses what has been done here, in England, Germany, and Russia and then envisions the enormous possibilities which lie before us. The artists and artisans of the screen have perfected a tool which he believes our educators, clergy, publicists, and national and industrial leaders should use with the greatest possible effectiveness for the good of the world.

"The war has made China drama-conscious," writes Karl Chia Chen in "China Looks Ahead." He describes the drastic changes in the attitudes of the Chinese toward choice of plays, manner of presentation, and professional workers. With traditional prejudices being swept aside, the outlook is both encouraging and exciting.

THE *SATURDAY REVIEW* FOR November 11 contains the *SRL* guide to books for young people. In her introduction to this section, Mary Gould Davis, children's book

editor, points out that, although there are fewer books, their individual rating is high and that new writers and artists have emerged. She then gives expression to a fact which cannot be too often reiterated, that our choice of a book for a child may mean much more than just "something to read." "It may mean new thoughts, new visions, new understanding. The end of this war will bring a new era and its story will be written by the children of today. Their equipment, their spirit, must be as invulnerable as we can make it."

HARPER AND BROTHERS HAS ANNOUNCED that a Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Trust has been established in memory of the late Eugene F. Saxton who for many years, as chief literary editor and adviser of publishing houses and friend of authors, gave his time, labor, and substance to assist and

encourage writers of distinction, often when they were still unrecognized and lacked financial resources. The fellowships will be granted only to creative writers who need financial assistance not otherwise available to undertake or complete work definitely projected. They are designed to encourage distinguished writing in the fields of fiction, poetry, biography, history, and the essay, as well as outstanding work of reporting, needed popularizations of knowledge, and original interpretations of cultural trends. The fellowships will not have a fixed value, but as a general rule no award of more than \$2,500 will be made to any one applicant in any one year. All money paid under a fellowship will be an outright grant, and no part of it will be returnable. Application forms may be had by writing to the Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Trust, 49 East Thirty-third Street, New York 16, N.Y.

Trends in Education for Peace

THE OCTOBER BULLETIN OF THE *Association of American Colleges* carries two articles which sound compelling notes in the current discussion of postwar needs and changes in school and college curriculums. The first, entitled "World Responsibilities of Education," is by Edward H. Kraus, dean of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts at the University of Michigan. Dean Kraus takes as a premise that "to assist in preventing another world catastrophe is a grave responsibility of all educators." He describes how and why educational leadership has moved westward and is now the responsibility of the United States and Canada. He predicts a great influx of students from other countries to our educational institutions and points out that we in the United States and Canada "must plan to receive large numbers of students and scholars from other countries, and we must, at the same time, recognize that a solemn responsibility rests upon us to serve them to the best of our ability and on the highest educational and spiritual levels. Moreover, we must also recognize that we

can profit greatly by sending substantial numbers of carefully selected students and staff members abroad. This migration of students and faculty from one country to another will after the war become increasingly important and should contribute vitally to a better understanding and hence to mutual cooperation among nations."

"KNOW OUR ALLIES" IS BY MAURICE Price, sociologist at the University of Illinois. Mr. Price recommends with vigor that we immediately attack the problem of providing, either by resurrection or by training, teachers with realistic and sympathetic understanding of the peoples, cultures, and races of our new allies, South America, Russia, and the Far East. He feels, from his own experience in the Far East, that qualified persons are available to teach about that part of the world. He has known personally "man after man and woman after woman, who has returned to this country, published a number of outstanding articles or perhaps a book (about some special phase of the situation in the Far East), but,

discovering no school interested in courses on the Far East, has gone into another kind of work or teaching." Such persons, Mr. Price thinks, should at once be issued a clarion call to the teaching profession. If the demand should exceed the supply, and it ought to, "next best substitutes would be men and women with a broad training in either history or the social sciences . . . who are ready to study both the fact and fiction, so to speak, of the Far East." Ignorance of the native languages should be no deterrent to giving general and introductory courses on China and Japan. There are plenty of good teachers giving courses in ancient history who don't know the Egyptian and Babylonian languages. Price also suggests that materials in courses in anthropology and sociology, now usually crowded out, could be used effectively to break down cultural and racial prejudices and could be expanded into a course on "Race, Environment, and Cultural Development."

ANOTHER ARTICLE, THIS ONE IN the November *Minnesota Journal of Education*, treats even more specifically the need for curriculum changes which would enable schools and colleges, as well as the agencies for adult education, "to provide increasing instruction in the cultures and problems of far flung areas of the world." Thus, S. George Santayana in his "Asiatic Studies in American Schools" summarizes the four functions which schools should have in the field of Asiatic studies. They are: (1) to equip the largest possible number of young students with basic information about Asia; (2) to develop respect for the indigenous qualities and varieties in Asiatic cultures; (3) to acquaint students with the major problems and issues and trends which Asiatic peoples now face and our relation to them; and (4) to develop in pupils fundamental friendliness and acceptance of right-minded men and women, regardless of race, creed, and culture. There are various methods of trying to fulfil these functions. Santayana gives a suggestive outline for a two-year

period of secondary-school study on Asia. As he rightly concludes, however, the march forward in the understanding of Asia "is largely dependent upon hundreds of individual teachers and administrators, who, within the possibilities of their own institutions and of their own educational philosophies, seek to readjust their work to the needs and possibilities of Asiatic study."

THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, various unrelated efforts "to do something about it" have, in part at least, utilized methods similar to those suggested by Kraus, Price, and Santayana. For example, to encourage students from among the Spanish-speaking peoples of continental United States and Puerto Rico to carry on advanced study and to prepare themselves for work among their own people, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs is offering a limited number of graduate fellowships for study during 1945 to be administered by the Institute of International Education. The October *News Bulletin* of the Institute announces that they are "for advanced study in such fields as languages and civilization of the Western hemisphere, sociology and social work, home economics, rural education and agriculture, education, and personnel administration, with emphasis on fields of practical value to the Spanish speaking population. The grants are available for young men and women, of Spanish speaking origin, residents of the United States or Puerto Rico who plan to apply their preparation for the benefit of the Spanish speaking groups in order to increase participation of those groups in the community life of the United States."

THE COORDINATOR OF INTER-American Affairs is also grappling with the textbook problem, the *News-Letter* of the Department of Education, San Juan, Puerto Rico, reports. One of the greatest handicaps in the use of good textbooks printed in the United States for the study of English in other American republics is the cost. The Inter-American Educational Foundation of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-

American Affairs is supervising a project under the sponsorship of the University of Iowa to produce adequate English-language textbooks at the lowest possible cost. The texts are designated for use in the other American republics as a further step in removing the language barrier to close inter-American understanding. The series will comprise eight books, integrated into a carefully graded course, as follows: elementary grammar, review grammar, elementary reader, intermediate reader, advanced reader, selected readings (appropriate excerpts from contemporary United States literature), anthology of United States literature, history of United States literature. Three separate series will be published, adapted for use in Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

THAT SOMETHING MORE THAN good English textbooks is needed in Puerto Rico and that much more knowledge and understanding of that sad possession of the United States should be acquired by the lay citizen is indicated in the autumn *Antioch Review* by Marjorie Clark in a melancholy essay, "Puerto Rico—American Orphan." Incidentally, Miss Clark touches on the English-language problem, which she describes as unsolved. "English, taught very largely by Puerto Ricans, who themselves learned it from Puerto Ricans, becomes increasingly unfamiliar." In the case of Puerto Rico this lack of English is more than a barrier to understanding. It cuts "Puerto Ricans off from the Continent, where they might find employment. If they are to expand, to break away from the Island, if emigration is to play any part in a solution of their population problem, the United States is the logical place for such expansion."

OTHER SIGNIFICANT STEPS TOWARD mutual understanding along the lines suggested by Dean Kraus are reported in the November *News Bulletin* of the Institute of International Education. Six Chi-

nese visiting professors are in the United States upon the invitation of the Department of State. Ten distinguished Chinese professors from the leading universities of China have been chosen by the Ministry of Education to visit the United States for purposes of research and study. The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council reports that approximately three thousand students have been relocated in 539 universities, colleges, and other educational institutions. Of this number, only 631 students needed financial help from the council. All institutions of higher education are now open to Nisei, and no special clearances from the Provost Marshal General's office are required. The *London Times*, according to the *News Bulletin*, reports that during the first year of teaching English to Allied forces and enlisted civilians in the Middle East, the British Army Educational Corps instructed 16,000 troops, including Poles, Greeks, French, Yugoslavs, Belgians, Maltese, Cypriotes, Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese. The Russian Student Fund has established a fellowship in honor of Frank L. Polk, who acted as vice-chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fund from its inauguration until his death last year. The fellowship is open to men or women students of Russian origin for study at the School of Library Service of Columbia University.

HOWEVER, AS IF REMINDING US that understanding, like charity, begins at home, Emeric Kurtagh, head resident of Kingsley House, New Orleans, contributes a sobering essay to the October number of the *Adult Educational Journal*, entitled "Easing Our Inter-regional Tensions." Kurtagh notes the signs of increasing tension between the North and the South and the fact that this tension, which is between two cultural patterns or sets of folkways rather than between two geographic areas, might result in serious national disunity both now and in the postwar period. The immediate friction has been caused by the

present unparalleled migrations from one section of the country to the other. Kurtagh lists several of the most important reasons for this friction as due to differences in: (1) attitudes toward the Negro; (2) attitudes of the Negro; (3) attitudes toward family, education, church, class, place of women; (4) attitudes toward work and work habits, planning, invention, originality; (5) attitudes toward government, law, unwritten law, justice, and politics. Bringing about a better understanding between our two major regions, Kurtagh feels, calls for "educational statesmanship on a giant scale." But two limited approaches to the problem would help a lot. One is to develop special pamphlets for our servicemen and civilians on the move, such as those instructing servicemen in the ways of England or the South Pacific. The other is to give special preparation and training to workers in national agencies who are to function in southern communities and to southern workers who go North.

THE TERM "MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING," whether of regions or of nations, implies a relationship between two entities. The will for such a relationship must be felt by both, if it is to be a real and lasting one. Mutual ignorance has long afflicted Franco-American relations. And that the French people are going to have to make an effort to understand us, as well as we them, if our future relations are to be cordial, is made clear by Eric M. Steel in his "The French Writer Looks at America," in the autumn *Antioch Review*. Mr. Steel gives Americans a series of lantern-slide pictures of themselves as portrayed in French plays and novels from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Most of them aren't beautiful or virtuous, and few of them show either knowledge or understanding of our national character. As Steel says, "Looking back over the years, we cannot escape the conclusion that the literary presentation of Amer-

ica by French writers has been, in the main, dangerously incomplete and ungenerous." Currently, however, "it is consoling to reflect that the most reputable elements of the French world of letters will, this time, be active on the side of cooperation." As we continue our own planning and efforts to achieve mutual understanding, it is only realistic to recognize the fundamental differences between ourselves and each of the various countries who are our allies. We shall have to remember that they are having to learn about us. We shall have to accept as a major premise in our relationships with each country, Steel's proposition relating to Franco-American relations. Steele writes: "The American and the Frenchman are, and are likely to remain, distinct varieties of the human species. But they will have to realize that there is place for both in the world of the future, and to secure the acceptance of this idea throughout both countries." In this statement he throws the ball of our own curriculum-planners right over the fence into the yard, and, it is to be hoped, into the hands, of the curriculum-planners of our allies.

A CANDID, GENEROUS PICTURE of America created with the above premise as part of its basic structure, is Cecil Northcott's "America in Wartime" in the October *Fortnightly*. It was written to explain us to the folks back home in Britain. It does. In the October *Blackwood's Magazine* is a moving essay, "The Children Come Aboard," by W. F. Fay, which by implication throws into stark silhouette what will be major educational problems after the war in countries now occupied by Nazis. It is the description of an evacuation of Yugoslav school children from an unnamed port to an unnamed destination by friendly British mariners. The lump it brings to the reader's throat is clear evidence that, after all, the tie which binds the strongest is the knowledge which makes us understand each other as human beings.

Curriculum Trends

"POST WAR LIBERAL EDUCATION—a Demurrer" by W. L. Werner, of Pennsylvania State College, appears in the summer *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*. Professor Werner demurs wittily and reasonably with the *Report of the Committee on the Re-statement of the Nature and Aims of Liberal Education to the Commission of Liberal Education of the Association of Colleges*. The committee report presents four principal recommendations for postwar educational procedure: aptitude and achievement tests on entering college; individualized instruction—the tutorial system and the use of source material; expert counseling; and achievement and comprehensive examinations at graduation. Werner considers the first recommendation pertinent, the other three, in the light of the financial prospects of colleges in the postwar world, "too expensive for the post war purse." But, as he says, "we shall need more teachers, more buildings, and an improved curriculum designed for adults. What can we do?" He suggests that, to get more teachers quickly, colleges will have to break down the barriers between high-school and college teaching positions. To remedy the building shortage, the systematic extension of junior colleges by the use of public school teachers could be undertaken. The most difficult problem is to design the new curriculum, which should not be an "idealistic blueprint" nor a "fanciful 'Pays de Sagesse'" such as that suggested by the committee report, upon which, according to Werner, "no practical curriculum could be based." "Our new post war college generation, bred in the long years of the depression and matured in war, will need a faith. They will not get it from tutors and examinations, nor from scientists contentedly isolated in laboratories, nor from apostles of culture bound in the amoral chains of history. . . . Our great organizations of scientists and scholars must examine their axioms and their aims, must correlate them with neighboring creeds,

must clarify them for impatient students, and must defend them courageously in the market place."

FURTHER THOUGHT ON THE CREATION of a new curriculum design as it relates to English comes from Haldeen Braddy, supervisor of military English, Texas Technological College, in the *Southern Association Quarterly*. Braddy recalls the concern among scholars immediately preceding the war about the low estate into which English instruction had fallen. That their concern was well founded was startlingly confirmed by the results of military examinations given to high-school and college students entering the Army and Navy. According to Braddy, "the pitiable state of English today unfortunately can be traced in a measure to the peace-time colleges which graduated unprepared high school teachers. . . . To be absolutely honest, the college graduate who today has a firm grasp of the development of our language is nothing short of an exception even among English majors!" Meanwhile, in military training programs at colleges, English is a required subject, for "military authorities are virtually unanimous in regarding a knowledge of English as one of the prerequisites of an officer," and Braddy cites the pertinent statement of General Patton: "If a man can't misunderstand an order, you're halfway to victory." Braddy, out of his own experience as a college teacher and former officer in the Army Air Corps, suggests six points which demand special emphasis in Army and Navy English programs: military English orientation; practical public speaking; remedial English, oral and written; reading range and comprehension; dictionary study and vocabulary building; and the basic essentials of military correspondence. "Above all else, military English must be realistic to the extent that the cultural values of English can never be overemphasized in programs for training future officers, inasmuch as it is these officers

who are not only our main support in time of war but who as veterans will assume highest responsibility in organizing the peace-time world. By the very nature of things, then, great literature must continue to occupy its lofty place."

DR. EDWIN R. VAN KLEECK, Assistant state commissioner of education, in New York, is vigorously defending the retention of the present teaching time allotted to English in the senior high schools of the state against the proposals now being advanced by some educators to reduce the required English instruction by one-third. Recently at a mass meeting of the State Central School Principals Association held at Syracuse he made a vigorous plea for more and better teaching of English. "The engineering colleges are adding courses in English. The proposed post-high school technical institutes will feature English. New York State has an enormous population of second generation European immigrants. The State has a huge number of aliens. If I could have only one subject taught in our schools it would be the mother tongue."

AS IF IN CONFIRMATION OF DR. VAN Kleeck's first statement, the Michigan College of Mining and Technology recently announced the establishing of an assistantship in engineering English to give training in the teaching of speech, technical writing, and literature to engineering graduates. Such an assistantship is believed to be an innovation. The assistant will be aided by

the engineering staffs in studying the application of language skills to engineering work and will do considerable classroom teaching, assist in the editing of technical papers, and otherwise familiarize himself with the major problems of English instructors in technical colleges.

TO STUDY SUCH CURRENT TRENDS in English education, a special committee has been set up by the New York City Association of Teachers of English, it is announced in the association's October *Bulletin*. "Radical innovations in various parts of the country involve the amalgamation of English and the Social Studies. To what extent does the English teacher, under such a plan, tend to lose his identity and usefulness?" This will be one of the questions the committee will consider. Another new committee will survey curriculum revision. The association this year is also sponsoring, together with the Biology and Social Studies Associations, an in-service course on intercultural education.

CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE English curriculum seems to have reached the White House also. When Mrs. Roosevelt recently celebrated her sixtieth birthday, she was asked what she would prefer to do if she didn't return to the Executive Mansion as First Lady after the 1944 elections. She replied: "I should like to have a job visiting Teachers Colleges. . . . I want to help students learn to love English literature instead of studying it as a chore."

Books

BASIC ENGLISH

The two books of Mr. I. A. Richards¹ here reviewed complement each other in a very interesting way. The one is an argument for the value of Basic English, and the other is a lengthy specimen of its application to the popularization of a classic.

Basic English and Its Uses ably presents the case for employing Basic as a lingua franca, as an introduction to full English for speakers of other tongues, and as a tool for improving the English speaker's mastery of his own language.

The opening chapter argues that English has the best chance of becoming the standard medium of international communication. It represents the special advantages of our language to be: its analytical structure, which, in Mr. Richards' opinion, makes it easy for all peoples to learn; the pre-eminent value of the great body of writings in it; and, finally, the number and wide geographical distribution of its speakers.

Since the case for Basic as a world language depends upon that for its parent, full English, it will be advisable to weigh the advantages claimed for the latter by Mr. Richards before we consider the special arguments for Basic which he advances in his later chapters.

The third advantage cannot be seriously challenged. English speakers are in a geographically strategic position to spread their language. And they are superior in numbers to any other linguistic group with the possible exception of the northern Chinese.

The second, however, is not so clear cut as Mr. Richards would have it. Judgments as to the relative value of English literature

will vary with the diverse standards of those who make up the world jury, and their several standards will shift from year to year with the trends in world affairs.

As for the first advantage—the supposed easiness of our language for speakers of other idioms—only those who have had the experience of learning English and a number of other languages as foreign tongues are really qualified to render an opinion upon it. Since the experiences of this class of persons have not been tabulated and scientifically evaluated, there is no way of passing upon the issue. I can only say that the few polyglots whose opinions I happen to know would by no means unanimously agree with Mr. Richards.

Whatever the truth may be as to this supposed advantage, on which Mr. Richards lays such great stress, it is at all events the least important of the three. For, even if English is linguistically the best possible choice for a world language, it will hardly attain to that position unless the English-speaking communities maintain their present activity in science and the arts and, with it, their commercial and political importance. And as long as they do so, English will be studied from China to Peru.

Any simplification of English which makes the process of learning it really easier for those not birthright English speakers will, of course, be a distinct contribution to international understanding, even though it does not realize Mr. Richards' ambition of turning all peoples to the study of our language.

The speed with which speakers of various foreign tongues have mastered Basic and have advanced from it to a command of full English is said by Mr. Richards to be extraordinary. If such is the case, and I have no doubt it is, this medium and the ingenious methods devised for teaching it

¹ *Basic English and Its Uses*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1943. Pp. 143. \$2.00. *The Republic of Plato: A New Version Founded on Basic English*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1942. Pp. 218. \$2.50.

deserve our praise and our active encouragement.

His claims that Basic is adequate for communication in all fields are pretty well substantiated in the extensive and diversified literature which has been written in it. Of course, it cannot rival full English in literary excellence, as he is very careful to make plain. But its inferiority in this respect should be of little moment to readers not expert in our language.

Since so much effort has been devoted to contriving this species of simplified English, to evolving methods for teaching it to people of other tongues, and to creating a literature in it, and since the effort has been well directed in the main, it seems to be the part of wisdom to support Basic both as a self-contained international language and as a tool for teaching full English to the linguistic alien.

The question as to whether it has vital uses for native English speakers is quite another matter. Mr. Richards believes it has, though he considers them secondary to its services to the non-native.

Among several which he mentions in his book, he gives most prominence to its possible employment for the improvement of our reading abilities and of our grasp of linguistic processes. He points out that the practice of turning passages from full into Basic English compels us to examine them more closely and more dispassionately than we would do otherwise and thus forms in us the proper habits for accurate reading. And he argues that the limitations of the Basic vocabulary will force us to employ metaphor and every other device of language in making our paraphrases and thereby acquaint us with linguistic resources which we have perhaps never fully appreciated.

I am sure that paraphrasing in Basic will accomplish these results, and I acknowledge their value, but I also believe that the same exercise in full English, when intelligently directed, will accomplish them nearly as well. If a teacher were to devote half the time and energy required for coaching Basic to the supervision of his students' paraphrasing in

full English, he would work some modest miracles. All he would have to do would be to warn his charges against mechanical synonym-hunting in the dictionary and to impose penalties for failure to heed his warning.

So much for *Basic English and Its Uses*, and now for the novel version of the *Republic* which Mr. Richards has given us.

It is an abridgment of a complete text made by him in strict Basic. For the sake of variety of style, he has permitted himself to use some common English words in the abridgment which are not found in Ogden's core vocabulary. He has reduced the length of the Greek original more than half by omitting some parts of it altogether and by simplifying its elaborate phrasing. He has bridged the gaps left by his longer omissions with digests of situation and argument, but has made his shorter ones without notice to the reader.

Richards says in substance that his aim has been to make the essentials of Plato's teachings about the good society assimilable by the widest possible audience. He claims that his omissions expose the fundamental structure of the dialogue and make it easier to follow than it is in the complete translations of Jowett and other distinguished Hellenists. He claims also that his free adaptation of the Greek in simple modern English interprets Plato's thought better for the average modern reader than the more faithful translations of the Victorians, which sound both old fashioned and, because of their literalness, even somewhat un-English.

I consider Richards' purposes unexceptionable. His book, if it accomplished them, should make a great many people more thoughtful about social morality than they have ever been. And I do not see how it could deter anyone from turning to Jowett or even to the original Greek text for the *ipsissima verba* of Plato. It might very well be a stimulus for a few to do so.

I feel that Mr. Richards has compressed the *Republic* judiciously for the ends he has had in mind. His version preserves the main

outlines of the original and omits few if any of the passages essential to the development of the central ideas. In a close comparison of Richards' and Jowett's versions of the first book I found no omission or compression in the former which I much regretted. The joiner work at the cuts is skilfully done, and the simplification of the speeches is not carried to the point where they become mere digests. The argument is still dramatic in the abridgment, and Socrates is still a vital personality.

The style, however, has its shortcomings, which at least partly offset its undeniable clarity. The purists, I believe, will object to it as informal in usage and barren of elegance. And even latitudinarians will quarrel with it as unnatural in both phrasing and cadence. The speeches of Socrates and his acquaintances simply do not sound like real talk on any level of usage on either side of the Atlantic. The following excerpt from the tilt between the former and Thrasymachus is a fair specimen:

SOCRATES: Fighting and hate and attempts to do one another down are the outcome of injustice. But from justice come love and harmony of mind. Is it not so?

THRASYMACHUS: So be it, not to be of a different opinion from you.

SOCRATES: How sweet of you, my friend. But take the one man by himself, will not the injustice within him make him unable to do anything rightly because he will be fighting with himself. Won't he be against himself as well as against the just?

THRASYMACHUS: Yes. Go on without fear. I'll say nothing against you. I'm not out to give your friends pain.

It is unfortunate for the cause of Basic English that this version of the *Republic* is not more successful stylistically. In defense of Basic, it should be pointed out that the weaknesses of style are due at least as much to the limitations of the writer as to those of his medium. He is not a creative writer but a scholar; he lacks the ear for dialogue of the novelist or playwright.

One must say the same thing of Mr. Richards' *Republic* as of his *Basic English and Its Uses*. Its evidence as to the practical

value of Basic for those who acquire English as a second language is convincing; its evidence as to the usefulness of this medium for the Britisher or the American is, at best, inconclusive.

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THE ELIZABETHAN WORLD AND OURS

It is most desirable that the works of scholars should be rendered intelligible to students; and yet, when popular versions appear, one is likely to be dissatisfied with them because they lack completeness and authority. Nevertheless, until scholars are willing and able to do their own simplification and interpretation, one ought to be grateful for such highly meritorious attempts as that of Dr. Tillyard in *The Elizabethan World Picture*.¹ During the last quarter of a century various scholars, mainly American, have worked out anew the cosmology or world order of the Elizabethans and have insisted that, in the applications of science and philosophy to literary problems, it is not the truth that matters so much as what the Elizabethans thought was the truth. On their conceptions of truth they thought and acted, and their grand scheme of the whole, erroneous to our way of thinking, was often part and parcel of their noblest literature.

The Elizabethans had inherited an extensive and carefully reticulated system of the order, arrangement, and function of the universe, with the Trinity at the top of two descending series, spirit on the one side and matter on the other. The nine orders of the angels, a variety of spiritual beings, the souls of men, animals, plants, and stones stood over against stars, planets, sun and moon, and all natural objects including the bodies of men and beasts—the latter series based on and made up of the four elements. Man, the anomaly and wonder of creation,

¹ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1944. Pp. viii + 108. \$1.75.

linked the two series and was part angel and part earth. We shall come to a better understanding if we stop and ask if the Elizabethans had not, all possible allowances and translations being made, a fair picture of the truth. There were, in any case, a vast series of correspondences between heaven and earth, the universe or macrocosm and man or microcosm, the body politic and the individual, and all of these with lower animals, plants, stones, and metals. The material was always provided with a spiritual counterpart or concomitant, and it was the labor and despair of philosophy and science to discover these correspondences and to implement them for man's use and guidance.

Of course, a world so conceived does not at first sight seem to be our world; but, when we think about it, we see that there are in both our world and that of the Elizabethans' certain immutable relationships—father and son, husband and wife, master and slave, king and subject, Creator and creature—which are independent of ideological change. Of course, also, such a system could have come about only through generations of searching eyes and ears of men as they attempted to understand their environment and serve their needs. We must conclude that the cosmology of a bygone age is not so much mere superstition as it is imperfect science and that it is still intelligible and significant; indeed, that it may be beautiful.

It is in this region that one finds some fault with Tillyard's book. The author hardly seems to realize that the world of the Elizabethans was on the whole like our world, that, in point of fact, essential living and thinking were much the same then as now. The Elizabethan world picture was made up of curious beliefs and odd bits, but I think the modern reader would have understood Tillyard's book better and would have thought better of his own ancestors if Tillyard had taken time to show the why and wherefore of the beliefs of the Elizabethans, perhaps if he had understood them more profoundly himself. It is not adequate

to treat the opinions of the Elizabethans as matters of curiosity rather than as matters in which the modern man may participate. Elizabethan ways of thinking about religion, philosophy, and science form a sort of poetic structure and are not greatly different from our own if we select our levels and make the necessary adaptations.

Dr. Tillyard's book is based on a limited number of sources, and one feels like saying tentatively and apologetically that he does not seem to have read enough of either primary or secondary written materials. He knows Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* and knows it well. He seems also familiar with the work of Greenlaw and other Spenser scholars. He knows less well works by Professors Curry, Johnson, Farnham, Lowes Campbell, and others; but shows no acquaintance with the writings of M. W. Bundy, Ruth Anderson (Maxwell), D. C. Allen, Howard Patch, R. H. West, and some others including the reviewer himself. The author makes good use of Boethius, Nemesius, Dionysius Areopagita, Giambattista Gelli (*Circe*), Montaigne (Raymond de Sebonde), Sir Thomas Elyot, Hooker, Burton, Goodman, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Davies, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others; but does not show knowledge of Pliny, Galen, and Plutarch among the ancients or of the very important group among the moderns which was made up of Ficino, Pico, Pontano, Reuchlin, Cornelius Agrippa, and later Robert Fludd. It is this group who are largely responsible for the special features of Renaissance cosmological belief as distinguished from that of the Middle Ages, since they developed the operative (sometimes theurgical) aspects of cosmology and brought, through astrology and natural magic, the world order into closer relation with ordinary life.

Of course, the author of so brief a book could not and should not have overloaded his pages with all these names, but to write a satisfactory short book on such an extensive subject demands a riper scholarship than to write a long one. The author can in such a case be definite about matters that demand

definiteness and vague about those which are vague. A fuller knowledge enables an author to think things through. It is doubtful if Tillyard's book, excellent as it is, achieves complete comprehension of its subject.

It is, however, unfair to find too serious fault with *The Elizabethan World Picture*. The book is well written (although punctuated in an odd way) and is needed for the enlightenment of teachers and students of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in schools and colleges as well as for the enlightenment of the general reader. The author's mastery of Renaissance literature appears everywhere and is both delightful and instructive. The best parts are those sections in which the older doctrines are illustrated from Elizabethan literature, namely, "Links in the Chain of Being" and "The Correspondences."

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FAVORITE AMERICAN PLAYS

This volume¹ is an example of mistaken scholarly generosity; it is an effort to place within the reach of the groundling a sampling from "America's Lost Plays"—that magnificent series of a hundred hitherto unpublished American plays, edited in twenty volumes for the Princeton University Press by two dozen outstanding students of our theater under the direction of Barrett H. Clark. It is a book of ten plays, one of which, *The Mighty Dollar*, has not elsewhere been published and thus constitutes an addition to the series.

But it is also a handsomely bound and beautifully printed volume. In fact, one would spot it instantly as a product of a university press. A commercial job would have used thin paper, cut the margins, packed the text in double columns, saved half the cost on the binding—and given the groundling twice as many plays. If he has his wits about him, and mostly he has, he

will not, like the silly author of this review, put his savings from his lunch money into so little type matter and so much heavy paper. He will wait and pray that the book be "remaindered."

It is a kind of disease, this custom of university presses to do everything in the most extravagant fashion possible. It would be ludicrous if it did not victimize scores of young people every year who pledge their futures to get their books published. In this instance, no future is in hazard; Barrett H. Clark's reputation will hardly be affected by this review. Nevertheless, one fair criterion to apply to the present volume is the test of what it might have been. It might have been just twice as good a "buy" for the indigent scholar.

Mr. Clark's Introduction is not calculated to increase the groundling's enthusiasm for what is offered him. The editor has given us the New York cast for the first production of each play, fairly detailed accounts of his and others' efforts to discover the best possible text, and (without fail) if it occurred, the reading of the piece over WPAF with some appropriate remarks by Mr. Clark. What profits the groundling to know that W. E. Able played a "Man" and W. F. Loon the "First Gaoler" in *Monte Cristo*? That Clark and Company have been diligent pursuers of texts, he should be entitled to take for granted. (At any rate, this information could have been much compressed.) And he looks upon WPAF as the present enemy of the theater and of culture. The groundling has a right to expect some information about the authors of these plays, their presentation, what sort of setting they were given, how the important parts were played, and how the public and the reviewers reacted to each. To be brief, he is entitled to the pleasant and informed essay on the theater which Mr. Clark can write when he is so moved, but which he did not choose to produce on this occasion. The groundling is, you see, a churlish knave who will not be reconciled with a handsome format if he wants plays, or with good intent, alas, if he wants his money's worth.

OSCAR CARGILL

¹ *Favorite American Plays of the Nineteenth Century*. Edited by Barrett H. Clark. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944. Pp. xxvii+553. \$3.75.

In Brief Review

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

FOR THE GENERAL READER

Tragic Ground. By ERSKINE CALDWELL. Duell, Sloan. \$2.50.

Pity—anger with the blindness of a social order which permits (or causes) the existence of such a family—is the atmosphere of this story of a southern family of poor whites. The Douthit family and many like them were uprooted by promises of fabulous wages in a war-boom town. The boom was short lived, and the stranded families were left unable to move back to former homes. The effect upon the children—the girls of eleven and thirteen—and upon the mothers who craved silk underwear and permanents, the disintegration of family and morals of the young, and the total lack of understanding in social workers arouse fury in Caldwell's mind and heart.

The World We Live In. By LOUIS BROMFIELD. Harper. \$2.50.

A group of admirable stories of varied background and vivid character analysis. Of greatest importance to readers who have not had Bromfield's European experiences are his stories of "international white trash" in Monte Carlo or similar resorts, whose futile lives were symbolic of a growing social state of nazism under other names.

The Building of Jalna. By MAZO DE LA ROCHE. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$2.50.

Readers of the Jalna novels will enjoy this throw-back to the 1850's, when Philip and Adeline as a youthful pair came to Canada to build the home which was to become famous as Jalna and to found a family (the Whiteoaks) which was to figure in several popular novels.

Stories of Writers and Artists. By HENRY JAMES. Edited, with an introduction, by F. O. MATTHIESSEN. New Directions. \$3.50.

Eleven long tales, each prefaced by an essay discussing the literary and social values and the author's success in developing the personality of his characters.

The Roots of the Tree. By HELEN TODD. Houghton, \$2.50.

The author of *A Man Named Grant* lived for some years in New York and attended classes at the New School for Social Research, where in the "University in Exile" she made many friends among scholar refugees. "A man cannot be exiled from himself" is the key to the story which she has written about one German refugee now a faculty member of a midwestern university.

Sunrise of the Menominees. By PHEBE JEWELL NICHOLS. Humphries. \$2.75.

An Indian love story into which the author has woven the past and present history of this Indian tribe in Wisconsin. Lew Sarett says: "This book should be read by all Americans interested in the complex sociological problem created by the white man and his attempt to administer Indian affairs." A long book, of high quality, rich in historical lore.

Try and Stop Me. Compiled and edited by BENNETT CERF. Simon & Schuster. \$3.00.

Witty and humorous comments, selected from Mr. Cerf's writings for magazines. Illustrations by Carl Rose.

Pause To Wonder. Edited by MARJORIE FISCHER and RALFE HUMPHRIES. Messner. \$3.00.

A very fine collection of strange, witty, and mysterious stories and selections. Maughan, Virginia Wolfe, Bemelmans, Steinbeck, Thurber, and D. H. Lawrence are among those represented.

The Great Lakes. By HARLAN HATCHER. Oxford University Press. \$3.50.

An excellent account of the development of a great region, from the Thousand Islands to the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior. A magnificent scene, beginning with a panorama from the air and ending with a journey around the shores of the lakes. From the time when Indians in canoes met the fur-traders to the present when the region is dotted with towns and cities, Mr. Hatcher has told the whole vital story of development with warmth and a fine sense of values.

A Great Time To Be Alive. By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK. Harper. \$2.00.

By the author of *On Being a Real Person*. The first sentence is: "This certainly is a ghastly time to be alive." Later he says, "This is also a *great time* to be alive." His point is that these present days and days to come require of us *adequacy*—personal adequacy. If we have adequacy in sufficiency, it is a great time to be alive. "In an age on ages telling/To be living is sublime." A collection of twenty-five sermons representative of the strength and weaknesses of people as Fosdick sees their struggles.

The Way of Life: According to Laotzu. By WITTER BYNNER. Day. \$1.00.

Lin Yutang writes: "If there is one book in Oriental literature which one should read above all others, it is Laotzu's *Book of Tao*. If there is one book that can claim to interpret for us the spirit of the Orient, or that is necessary to the understanding of China's behavior, it is the *Book of Tao*. If I were

asked what antidote could be found in Oriental literature and philosophy to cure this contentious modern world of its inveterate belief in force and struggle for power, I would name this book of 'five thousand words' written some 24 hundred years ago."

Middle East Diary. By NOEL COWARD. Doubleday. \$2.00.

In diary form, an account of Coward's excursion through the Middle East as an entertainer to the fighting men. He had an excellent opportunity to talk with men of fame and power, soldiers immediately behind the lines, and the wounded and the sailors in harbor. "I had seen much homesickness and loneliness but no bitterness; much suffering but no despair, and, shining through it all, the same unconquerable spirit. . . . As long as such courage as theirs can emerge out of chaos . . . whatever strains and stresses the future may hold for us, we shall still have a chance."

The Theatre Book of the Year, 1943-44. By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN. Knopf. \$3.00.

A completely rounded survey of the New York theater and its productions in the season of 1943-44. . . . Covers every play of the period produced professionally and also those offered by various experimental groups. Mr. Nathan adds his own criticism, appraising each production and giving its relation to the theatrical history as a whole—its place in the stream of production. Not an anthology.

Dear Baby. By WILLIAM SAROYAN. Harcourt. \$2.00.

A collection of very short stories, of snatches, sketches, ranging through laughter, tears, anger. Saroyan, in theme, structure, and expression.

Prize Stories of 1944. Edited by HERSCHEL BRICKELL. Doubleday. \$2.50.

This twenty-sixth volume of the series gives, in the Introduction, reasons for the choice of the judges—a distinguished group: J. P. Marquand, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and J. Donald Adams. Of the prize story, "Walking Wounded," by Irwin Shaw, Mr. Marquand says, "It comes close to being an example of what the new form ought to be." The Introduction and the "Short-Story Scene" add much to the value of the collection.

Four Plays: Music at Night, The Long Mirror, They Came to a City, and Desert Highway. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. \$2.50. Harper.

Desert Highway is a play about soldiers for soldiers, now being acted by British, American, and Canadian men. In his Preface, Priestley says that he believes that after the war the theater may come into its own—there are already signs that it is playing a great part in the life of the people. Humor, satire, and a thoughtful awareness of the confusion

in the hearts of men give a real worth to every thing Priestley writes.

China Takes Her Place. By CARL CROW. Harper. \$2.75.

The author of *Four Hundred Million Customers* tells the story of the great revolutionary change which has taken place in China during the last thirty years and makes predictions concerning that nation's future. A clarifying study of the social upheaval in China at this time.

Philadelphia Lawyer: An Autobiography. By GEORGE WHARTON PEPPER. Lippincott. \$3.75.

Time: Civil War to present. Notable cases, legal history, anecdotes, written in a chatty, breezy manner by a man whose own life as a public servant has been that of an upright citizen first and a lawyer second. Illustrated.

Westward the Women. By NANCY WILSON ROSS. Knopf. \$2.75.

A story of the women of all sorts and conditions of life who made homes of the covered wagons on the trail and the hastily erected cabins at journey's end—if they lived to reach the end. The squaw, the missionary, the feminist, the characters who stood out as leaders and heroines are not forgotten.

Bridge to Brooklyn. By ALBERT E. IDELL. Holt. \$2.75.

A sequel to *Centennial Summer*, which was light and cheerful reading. The family now lives in Brooklyn, and their lives are as colorful and entertaining as ever. Little plot but lots of human interest.

Account Rendered. By VERA BRITAIN. Macmillan. \$3.00.

Francis Halkin, a British soldier injured in World War I, became subject to attacks of amnesia which ruined his career. World War II came and with it tragic consequences. Emotional appeal.

Deep Delta Country. By HARNETT T. KANE. Duell, Sloan. \$3.00.

The Mississippi Delta country interest grows. This is a history of its varied peoples: French, Spanish, Balkan, Italian, Philippine, Chinese, and Yankee. An "American Folkways Book."

Lusty Wind for Carolina. By INGLIS FLETCHER. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.00.

By the author of *Raleigh's Eden*. Long, historical background, pirates, and plenty of romance to make it popular.

They Dream of Home. By NIVEN BUSCH. Appleton-Century. \$2.75.

Problems of rehabilitation. Five ordinary boys trying, under bitter circumstances, to adjust themselves to the world to which they return. Significant.

Young 'Un. By HERBERT BEST. Macmillan. \$2.50.

Co-selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club for November. A fourteen-year-old girl and her brother, a year older, upstate New York, in the 1800's, deserted by their father, struggle to keep the home-fire burning. Escape reading; good.

Anything Can Happen. By GEORGE and HELEN PAPASHVILY. Harper. \$2.50.

The story of a Russian who became an American. Looking backward, he writes a hilarious story of his adjustment to American life.

Chedworth. By R. C. SHERRIFF. Macmillan. \$2.75.

A story of another beautiful English estate and of *The Family*, with adoring villagers, hedges, gardens, and all the delightful scenery of the English countryside. But the young master has returned from the war blinded; the estate is burdened by taxation. Perhaps what we in America call "living beyond their means" has helped, but the author of *Journey's End* does not seem to see that side of it. What shall the young lord do? A rather charming story of the home front. Provocative and easy reading.

A Selection from the Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Selected, with an introduction, by W. H. AUDEN. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Not long ago, Tennyson certainly was among the most familiar of English poets known to American readers of poetry. More recently, his *Idylls of the King* and *In Memoriam*, upon which a generation ago every school child was raised, have appeared less and less frequently in poetry books for students. We now have a reading public pretty generally unfamiliar with Tennyson. This new volume embraces a wide range of Tennyson's best work and should be a good introduction to the past poet laureate. The contents are divided into five parts: "Poems and Ballads," "Maud," "Idylls on Classical Themes," "In Memoriam," and "Songs and Occasional Pieces." An acute and provocative introduction, which is both biographical and analytical, by Mr. Auden, who perhaps among contemporary English poets has had the greatest impact on the development of modern poetry, is one of the best things in the book.

The Iliad of Homer: A Line for Line Translation in Dactylic Hexameters. By WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH and WALTER MILLER. Macmillan. \$3.75.

The first attempt to reproduce in English, in the meter of the original, Homer's great epic. Illustrated by the thirty-nine famous classical engravings of John Flaxman. Despite the seeming pretentiousness of such a task, the result is not pompous but most satisfying in preserving the spirit of Homeric simplicity. The joint labor of love by two classical scholars who were lifelong friends makes the epic

accessible and exciting as poetry to a generation untutored in the classics. An introduction and an index to gods, goddesses, and heroes, help too.

V-Letter and Other Poems. By KARL SHAPIRO. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.00.

Shapiro's first book, *Person, Place, and Thing* (1942), led to his receiving a Guggenheim fellowship and a special award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. For more than two years now he has been on active duty in the Southwest Pacific, where all the poems in this volume, except one, were written. Nevertheless, in his Introduction he writes: "I have tried to be on guard against becoming a 'war poet.' . . . In the totality of striving and suffering we come to see the great configuration abstractly, with oneself at the center reduced in size but not in meaning, like a V-letter." Many of the best poems in the volume, however, reflect his wartime experiences and thought and show him an articulate spokesman for his brothers-in-arms.

Louder than the Drum. By GERARD PREVIN MEYER. New York: League To Support Poetry. \$1.60.

The winning manuscript in the 1943 contest of the League To Support Poetry, chosen for "its concentrated passion and power, its variety and scope, and its originality."

Moderate Fable and Other Poems. By MARGUERITE YOUNG. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.00.

A second book by the author of *Prismatic Ground*. A collection of poems written since 1937 and appearing previously in the *Kenyon Review*, *Accent*, *Poetry*, *Common Sense*, etc. Perceptive, varied, and several of them quite distinguished.

Five Young American Poets: Third Series, 1944. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions.

In this collection *New Directions* presents the work of five promising young American poets—four North and one South American. They are Eve Merriam, Jean Garrigue, Tennessee Williams, John Frederick Nims, and Alejandro Carrion. Carrion's poems are presented both in the original Spanish and in translations by Dudley Fitts and Francis St. John. Each poet is represented by about forty pages of verse and an essay on his personal theory of poetry. Important reading for those who wish to keep up with the poetry of these times.

FOR THE TEACHER

A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Sonnets. 2 vols. Edited by HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS. Lippincott. \$8.50 per volume.

This new variorum edition of Shakespeare's sonnets is blessed with a felicitous preface by its editor which immediately dissipates the hesitancy with which one usually approaches large, heavy, scholarly volumes. As a result, further browsing and

serious study are encouraged and, of course, prove most rewarding.

The Dissidence of Dissent: The Monthly Repository, 1806-1838. By FRANCIS E. MINEKA. University of North Carolina Press. \$4.00.

Most books on religion are unhappily dull. This one isn't. As Moncure Conway, writing in 1894, said, "In the *Monthly Repository* you will find a better history than anywhere else of the progress of English thought and reform." This is not so surprising when one recalls that the *Repository* published the early work of now well-known writers, such as Robert Browning, Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill, and William Johnson Fox, who was for long its editor. Mineka, who writes with a lively and flexible style, covers the entire range of religious, political, social, and literary thought reflected in the *Repository*, and in his Introduction gives an account of the inception and growth of the Unitarian movement in England and a survey of English religious periodicals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Readers interested in our own "Concord writers" will especially find a perusal of it fruitful.

The Percy Letters: The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Edmund Malone. Edited by ARTHUR TILLOTSON; DAVID NICHOL SMITH, and CLEANTH BROOKS (general eds.). Louisiana State University Press. \$3.00.

The first volume to be issued of a series of some eight or ten volumes of *The Percy Letters* which is being published by the Louisiana State University Press. The letters in this volume cover the period from 1779 to 1811, when Percy, as bishop of Dromore, was immolated in the wilds of Ireland and dependent for news of the world upon magazines (which sometimes took eight months to reach him on the packet from London) and upon the letters of his friends. Absorbed in the duties of his bishopric, the author of the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* still retained his keen interest in antiquarian matters and in the literary activities of his contemporaries. Malone, who as an Irishman appreciated both Percy's isolation and his great intellectual ability,

and who was himself engrossed in his editions of Shakespeare and Dryden, wrote the bishop frequently, both to consult him as a scholar and to inform him as friend of the London doings of their acquaintances. To one familiar with the eighteenth century, reading Malone's letters is like reading the hometown paper, as indeed it must have seemed to Percy. The bishop's letters are fewer in number but equally interesting.

FOR THE STUDENT

English Literature: Modern, 1450-1939. By G. H. MAIR, 2d. rev. ed. "Home University Library of Modern Knowledge." Oxford University Press. \$1.25.

A. C. Ward, who writes the Preface to this edition of Mair's handy little volume, describes it as "exactly the right kind of guide for a young student eager to find his way through the maze of modern literature, for G. H. Mair's style has a friendly intimacy which at once inspires confidence in his liberal and humane outlook and makes the reader receptive to his informative, sane, and stimulating commentary." (The reviewer, who as a student, for years kept a copy at her "beddes hede," agrees.)

The Source Theme: A Manual for Gathering Library Material, Organizing and Preparing the Manuscript. By LUCYLE HOOK and MARY VIRGINIA GAVER, College Book Store, State Teachers College, Trenton, N.J. Pp. 43. \$0.30.

A manual worked out by an English teacher and a librarian describing a desirable step-by-step procedure for the correlated fields of library usage and writing technique.

On the Air: Fifteen Plays for Broadcast and Classroom Use. Collected and edited by GARRETT LEVERTON. Samuel French. Pp. 259. \$2.00.

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